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# ETHNA;

OR,

ETCHINGS IN BLACK AND WHITE.

BY

MRS. STUART LAIDLAW,

AUTHORESS OF

"LETTERS TO MY GODCHILD," "A CATECHISM ON THE MASS,"  
AND SEVERAL "TRANSLATIONS."

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Dedicated with love to dear kind friends.

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1881.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE writer of these pages has been impelled to the work by a sense of duty towards the unjustly despised Negro race.

Her object has been for the purpose of showing to the English world what a black African can be, and is, when as a Catholic he is brought under the influence of the Church, and trained with real Christian love in civilised life.

She writes from her own experience of many years, both in childhood and afterwards in married life.

The characters are not by any means picked, but are only just a few specimens out of the whole population taken from among those who immediately surrounded her.

The incidents recounted are all true, and strictly faithful both in outline and detail.

As every character is drawn from life, and the

*How - done*

chief desire has been to give a perfectly true portraiture, it was impossible to try to increase interest by any fictitious sensational colouring; therefore it is hoped that any want in this respect will be, for truth's sake, overlooked.

She earnestly trusts that the very beautiful simplicity of these good people, with their childlike faith and devotion, will be interesting enough without any made-up addition.

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# ETHNA;

OR,

## Etchings in Black and White.

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### CHAPTER I.

IN the verandah of a beautifully-situated house, on the rise of a very lofty hill in one of the charming islands of the West Indies, were seated a most lovely and more-than-usually-met-with sweet and winning woman and her children.

She and her little girl were at needlework; two boys of more tender years, having said their spelling tasks and read, were at play with their toys at her feet.

From time to time, as she raised her head, her eyes rested with longing look on the deep blue ocean, seen from where she sat between two jutting points of high green-clad mountains; for the daily-expected steamer from another island would pass this way on its object

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of anchoring in the harbour, and in that steamer she hoped her husband would be, returning from transacting some government business of responsible colonial nature.

She looked in vain, however, this afternoon, for the vessel containing so very precious a freight to her appeared not, and she turned, as usual, for solace to the prattle of her children. The society and training of these, her treasures sent to her from heaven, formed, next to her devotions and trust in Providence, her chief comfort and delight.

Lady de Montfort enjoyed above all other recreations the retirement and seclusion of the pretty coffee plantation her husband had purchased as a country seat. She did not very well bear the heat of a tropical climate, and therefore the cooler air and more invigorating temperature of the mountains were absolutely essential for her health.

Only when public entertainments were necessary, or when through press of government business her husband was kept for sometimes months in the hot town, did she leave the loved retreat; and when left alone, as she often was by the peremptory calls to other places under his care, nothing could induce her to cross the river which, embedded in the ravine beneath the hill on which the house stood, formed one of the boundaries of the estate. This river ran across the road which skirted the shore, and which was the favourite evening ride for the dwellers in the sultry but very picturesque

town, the capital of the island. Running as it did across the road into the sea, about four miles from the town, and terminating the only flat piece of ground which served to gratify the wishes of those who loved a canter, it formed a natural turning-point from whence to canter back again.

Equestrians jokingly called this sweet little rippling stream "Lady de Montfort's Barrier." Often did they wish to cross it and mount the hill to inquire for her health, as she was deeply loved; but had they done so at the evening riding hour, darkness would have overtaken them ere they could have returned, except just when the moon was shining at its brightest; for the mountain roads are narrow and very dangerous, winding along the sides of steep acclivities, with deep ravines below, so that without a brilliant light showing clearly every turning of the pathway, the rider might be in an instant precipitated headlong a hundred fathoms down.

Here Lady de Montfort usually dwelt, tending and instructing her children, nursing and directing the negroes, and was the confidential friend of all.

The garden and pleasure-grounds gave her much amusement, and here she loved to collect all the European plants which could, with her greatest care, be made to grow: a strawberry or an apple were wonders to place on the drawing-room table to look at—but not to taste. Roses and violets, and a few others of our dearest English flowers, would, however,

\* be more good-natured, and would often afford her the delight of taking or sending a sweet bouquet to some sick English friend who, languishing with tropical fever and sighing with longing heart for dear, dear England, found refreshment and ease at the sight of her sweet, much-loved flowers.

Another pleasure to her besides cultivating English flowers, was that of painting the native ones—not like those of her own land which she loved best, breathing sweet odours far and wide, but like the birds of brilliant plumage, which are destitute in song, and even in note immusical: so these magnificent gems of nature are not only perfectly without perfume, but even in many cases quite unpleasant; yet, as if to compensate for this defect, how exquisitely are they formed, in what delicacy of texture, and in how surpassing splendour of colour!

Lady de Montfort was very skilful with her paint-brush, yet how often was she baffled in producing the extreme peculiar brightness as well as depth of tint—the fragile nature which would wither and perish ere she could get it on her paper. Such as these would be gathered for her by the negroes from the almost inaccessible tops of mountains or the perilous beds of deep ravines, where they seem to be able to climb about as easily as goats. They loved to get them for her; and then they would show their ivory teeth in a long grin, exclaiming and gesticulating in amazement at the extraordinary (to them) reproduction of what

they had gathered on paper, hardly believing what they saw, and thinking her a being quite of another sphere—certainly not, in their idea, a mortal woman of this earth.

By such things, her kindness and her love, and her music, which charmed them intensely, she gained great influence over them.

These copies of the flowers she used to send home to England as specimens of the true native tropical vegetation, growing wild everywhere in the greatest luxuriance; so that to fill her epergne with a far more glowing, graceful, and effective bouquet than could be had from the hothouses in England, she had only to send a negro or two out among the mountains with a basket. These, however, are only the strictly native ones: others, again, in great abundance, which have been brought from various places within the tropics, flourish here, having very powerful perfumes; among these, the coffee and the orange trees, all the great variety of jasmines, hyacinths, and lilies, the grand and beautiful daturas, the hibiscus, frangipanes, legistremiums, and syringas, with millions of creepers and orchids hanging from every tree, twining from bush to bush, and sweeping along the ground.

Fancy high mountains clad from base to summit with every imaginable shade of green, from the lightest to the very darkest shades, literally gemmed and studded with these countless blossoms; streams of water rushing down every valley, with every here



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and there a fall foaming over huge rocks, and dashing on with such haste to reach the sea, it would seem as if the filling of the ocean depended on them.

Imagine this, and you will have a picture which will give you an idea of what to a nature like Lady de Montfort's afforded her far deeper pleasure than society in general.

Her day was spent from morn till eve, first in gathering fresh dew-besprinkled flowers for the church, in visiting and providing for the sick and needy all round her, and next in teaching her children.

When her husband came home to dinner, tired with the duties of his government, he found her decked and ready to bid him welcome ; every minute detail attended to that could please him ; every effort made to soothe, amuse, cheer, comfort and make him happy.

This was doing her duty ; and the entire giving up of herself, her wishes, her privileges, even every want and comfort, for the sake of duty, and trying to be what God required her to be, was the great aim of her heart, the one grand object which filled up every blank, and dashed away the tear that rolled—yes, it must be owned—too often down her cheek.

Prayer helped her, Holy Communion gave her strength, kneeling on in resignation to the will of Heaven sustained her ; but how deeply did she feel all through some heavy trials she had to bear, that

*Perfection was hard to gain.*

## CHAPTER II.

"DEAREST MAMA, how long do you give me to finish embroidering this robe for Babet's baby? She is getting very impatient for it, and I am so tired," said Ethna, the little girl of eleven years.

"You have been a long time, darling; I don't wonder at Babet becoming impatient, particularly as it is for her baby to be baptized in."

"Mama, how very funny it is of you to have so many little black god-children—don't you think so? they are such very odd-looking things, and when they have on white robes and white caps, they look more particularly odd than ever, the black face and the black arms peeping out from the white. I certainly do not like black babies."

"And yet they have souls within them, Ethna, which, when baptized and brought thereby into the Church, are made heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and as precious in God's sight as you are, my child."

"Yes, mama, you have told me that before; but how is it that they have such black skins, and are so very ugly?"

"Ugly only to our idea. Ask Babet what she thinks of her baby, and I am sure she will say it is a beautiful, sweet, little thing."

"Oh! that I am sure she will," said Ethna, laughing. "I heard papa talking to you one day about something, and he laughed and said, 'There's no accounting for tastes,' so I suppose it is the same with Babet. But, seriously, mama, why is it these dear negroes, we like so much, should be black?"

"Why? my dear child, you are always asking the reason for everything, and for most things it is right you should gain all the information you can; but to inquire why the Almighty has done what pleased Him to do, or arranged such and such matters in His universe, is not so well—indeed, it is very wrong; for whatever it is necessary for our salvation or our happiness and well-being on this earth to know, He has vouchsafed to reveal to us by the teaching of His Church. Nowhere is it explained why He has been pleased to create some men white and others black; therefore, it is wrong to try to find out, and if we knew, it could be of no advantage to us; but I will tell you of a very proper and advantageous question to ask—Why do white people generally look down with so much contempt on the black race of men? and I can answer you there, that it is because of their great and presumptuous pride—a sin for which they will no doubt have to answer very sorely before the judgment-seat of God. Who are we that we should think ourselves better than they?"

“And there is another you may very profitably ask, which is—Why do these poor simple black people look up to us white with such veneration, admiration, and love when we treat them kindly; and are so ready to be led, influenced, and taught by us? and I can answer you again, here, that it is because of their humility—a virtue most pleasing to Almighty God—more so, perhaps, than any other, while pride is to Him most hateful.

“For this great pride of the white people, which has been kept up so long, and is going on still, I fear there is a heavy penalty to pay; and that England, at least, with her vast empire, will have more to answer for than she can very well bear or stand against, in more ways than one.

“If England were asked why she was so proud, and did not use her power in a more Christian spirit—wherefore she did not send and teach all these nations the Catholic faith, in the same way, and in the truth as she herself had been taught by St. Augustine, where would she hide her poor confused head? what excuse can she give for her indifference, her self-opinionated rebellion, and her intense selfishness? Poor England!

“Pray, my child, that she may wake up and redeem the past. We are bound to show the poor blacks every sympathy, the greatest gentleness, love, forbearance, and pity; to feel that we owe the Almighty a great debt on account of them. We ought to take the greatest

pains to teach and improve them in every way, and at the same time try to gain from their example all we can; for, indeed, we can learn from them a very great deal, likely to be of the greatest benefit to ourselves.

"Our teaching them should be done in the very humblest way—feeling it a great privilege to be called to such a work—done as a special offering of gratitude to the Almighty in return for all that has been done for us, as well as from knowing it to be our bounden duty.

"The one way to act with these poor, despised, neglected people, is first by giving them the faith, to place them under the strict discipline of the Church, and then to take them individually to our hearts and homes; and for the love of our Blessed Lord, who atoned for them as well as for us, work with them by gentle, loving teaching, and so mould them to His will; bearing in mind always, that our example in the Christian life is the one thing of the greatest importance, and for the failing in which we shall one and all most ruefully have to give account.

"If the teacher of the Gospel fail in its maxims—if the Catholic Christian fall short in a holy life, and not only commit sin himself, but leads those into sin who, before learning the faith, scarcely knew in what sin consisted, where will he be found? This is why I felt so pleased when our good priest employed you to read to them those simple sermons and pretty stories, which must teach them and do them good."

"Do you know, mama, I don't quite like it ; I feel so nervous when I am seated on a stool, and all the queer-looking people squatting on the ground, and looking up at me, as if they thought it so very wonderful to be able to read."

"You must conquer that feeling, dear, by recollecting Who gave you the power to read, granted you the blessing of a clear sweet voice, and the means of education. You should always remember that the first thing you have to do, is to use all these gifts in the service of God Who gave them."

"And if I do make these people better by reading to them, will it be wrong to be proud of it?"

"In one sense it would: it would be very wrong and very dangerous for you to think of it as something you had done, as having any merit in yourself; but there would be no harm in feeling happy that you had been used as an instrument in doing this good."

"Mama, ought these people ever to be slaves? I know when papa bought this estate, he made them all free because you wished it, and they said, that to show how much they thanked him, they would not go away, but would work for him, if he let them keep their huts and the pretty gardens round them, and the piece of land for their provisions. And I know papa arranged it all with them to keep all this, and to work on the estate every day, pick, cherry and dry the coffee, for three bits (a coin in the shape of a half circle, being a quarter of a dollar) a day while they behaved well; but

that if they were wicked or disobedient he would send them away. Ought they ever to have been made slaves?"

"No, my dear, certainly not—it is a great disgrace to Christians to have anything to do with slavery. The Church does not in any way sanction it. The good Pope St. Gregory the Great strictly forbade everything in the shape of slavery. For any one to have the power to buy or sell his fellow-creatures in the same way as he would his horse or his ox, is thoroughly abominable. They who traffic in this manner excuse themselves in many various ways, and if Christians at all, by saying that these people are the descendants of Ishmael, and have been made subjects; but they forget that the new law does away with all this."

"But, mama, when you and papa were talking about it the other day, I thought papa seemed to say it was a good thing for the negro to be a slave, because it was the best way of training him into obedience, submission, and learning the laws of God."

"We were discussing the for and against between ourselves, my love—not as a matter of right and wrong, but as to the advantages of it to a savage when well treated; and I will tell you a little of what our thoughts are."

"These people of South Africa appear to be a somewhat ruder class than the same race in India or elsewhere. The Apostle St. Thomas succeeded in making Christians of many of the Indians, and the Portuguese

who traded with them, though in most cases bad Catholics and a scandal to the faith, as St. Francis Xavier so bitterly lamented, yet kept up religion in a measure and helped on intellectual development and civilisation; so that when St. Francis Xavier went out to India, in his self-sacrificing spirit, to work among them, he found as it were a field which had been cultivated, but in which very few ears of wheat remained, and a great quantity of tares had sprung up. They were not exactly rude savages like those in Africa, but capable of understanding his preaching; so that by his eloquence and earnestness, as well as the beautiful example he set them, he converted and baptized them by hundreds and thousands.

“It was something very much the same with the people of England when St. Augustine came from Rome to convert them; but these South Africans have not as yet had anything done for them, shame to the Christian world it is! Though in reality very much superior to the very low infidel class of Great Britain, they are still wild barbarians with uncultivated intellects, and without the knowledge of any law but self-will. They require to be taught to love white people so as to be influenced by them, and then it is very easy to make them Christians.

“The best way, no doubt, because it is the most humble and likely to please them, is for several priests together to go to Africa and obtain leave from the natives to establish a monastery and build a church,



taking with them ample means and also a large supply of such presents as would win them to be friendly. Self-sacrificing nuns, too, might go in the same way, and by nursing them and teaching their children, soon gain their affections, and prepare them in this way to receive the faith, practise it, and become good Catholics. This is the way the Church generally acts, and never fails in success,—not even in China, where the Jesuits are at work now.

“As a matter of course, however, the lives of those who undertake such work is a martyrdom, and they often shed their blood as martyrs; but glory in it as much as the early saints did—those favourites of yours, my darling, St. Pancratius, St. Agnes, and St. Sebastian.

“Your papa was not advocating slavery, but we were commenting on the wonderful good which had been done to these people here, now good practical Catholics, and yet who were, not very many years ago, wild savages in Africa; and we feel that bringing them away from their own people, and domesticating them among ourselves, is one very powerful and beautiful way of making them thoroughly good, honest, and civilised Christians.

“Indeed, if it could be done by mutual engagement—an invitation on our part and a binding themselves on theirs, as apprentices, it would be as good a way as any, because they require training and teaching quite as much as children do. Without proper authority

over them this is very difficult, and a very firm but kind authority is found to be—most naturally—more essential with the wild African than with any one else. It really is as necessary as for the training of a wild horse, because at first it is as ridiculous to try to reason with them as it would be to reason with a baby.

“One could not invite them to England or to any cold climate, because it would not suit them; but to any of our colonies in the tropics they might be taken easily.

“All that is wanting is, that love of God which must show itself in working for His glory, and the good as well as the salvation of His creatures. No one with this spirit would make slaves of them.

“It is not a difficult thing at all to teach them the Catholic faith, because everywhere throughout the world the people of every nation have within them a latent idea of a Deity and the necessity for worship; and not only this, but the worship by offering sacrifices, is a general rule, be their conception of the Deity what it may.

“God Himself taught Adam to worship Him by offering the daily sacrifice on an altar—shedding the blood of an animal by slaying it, and then burning it with fire, that the smoke might rise towards heaven.

“Adam and all his descendants understood why; and it was regularly done, as you know, up to the time when our Blessed Lord instituted the unbloody sacrifice in its stead.

"Now, at the time of the most impious building of the Tower of Babel by some wicked people of that time, God was so offended by their presumptive insolence, that He confounded their speech in order to prevent the understanding each other as to what they wished to do; they, therefore, dispersed themselves in different directions over the earth as far as they could. This was the origin of so many different languages; and this accounts for the one general rule for worship, by offering the bloody sacrifice.

"Though they degenerated so rapidly and became so extravagantly wicked as to forget (one may believe purposely) the true God, and made to themselves idols, they still retained the method for worship which had been taught them, and offered this worship to their idols instead of the true God as was their bounden duty. It is, therefore, only necessary to convert them to the right faith, and they know naturally what they ought to do.

"Besides the blessing of God on teaching the true faith, this will show clearly why it is that Protestants and all other heretics of every shade do not, and cannot, really succeed anywhere in making them Christians, because they, having rebelled against the method of worship by offering the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass, do not teach it of course, and the savage understands no other mode of worship than that of offering sacrifice.

"Therefore, it is very easy to make clear to him, after

some instruction, that the bloody sacrifice must be given up to the unbloody instituted in its stead, and also the benefit it is to themselves.

“But the great difficulty is to make them lead Christian lives; for if this is the case with the civilised, cultivated, and refined Catholics, what must it be with the savage who has not known God’s laws at all, and whose only rule of life has been the unrestrained following of his self-will? Good dispositions he has naturally; his general character is affectionate, faithful, good-natured, most kind,—docile when not provoked, and very humble; with a degree of heroic nobleness only requiring exciting causes to bring it forth, which would astonish any one and win admiration anywhere; but he has no rule beyond pleasing himself,—no guide for action, no power of self-control. Impulse is his one motive, whether for good or evil.

“It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for improving him at all that he should be under very firm, strict control and authority. And it is also essential that it should be an authority which he fully recognises as such, and is therefore perfectly willing to submit to, by the influence of his reason and the dictates of his heart, else he will rebel against it in some way or other. He was always rebelling against the laws of slavery, but they being so powerful, he was obliged to submit to them against his will; and at the same time this very slavery proved to be such a good thing for the poor creature’s soul.”

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"Ah! I see, mama, you are thinking most of the good to his soul."

"Yes, I am, darling, and to this end even great sufferings go for nothing, and slavery be really a boon. Yet I do not wish the negro to be made a slave in any way; his nature is far too noble, too generous, too beautiful for this; it only degrades him, and is a cruelty no noble soul could ever inflict on him. But the experience your papa has had while governing this island makes him feel the necessity of just as much firm authority as is used with children at school. Those negroes who have been brought here by the English ships of war—rescued from slave-ships and set free under the British flag—require to be treated just like babies; and, as is the case always with children, so with them, kindness, love, and unwavering firmness as to right and wrong, makes them as humble, and docile, and tractable as children are when well governed. We feel, therefore, that if bringing them away from their own country to live with us for a while could be done well, it would be the most rapid and most successful way of making them what they ought to be; but then, dear, these are simply our thoughts on the subject—wiser heads may think more wisely than we do.

"Unlike people of other nations, they never seem to wish to return to Africa.

"In no case, after having been for any time domiciled with us, do they ever attempt it—at least, I have never

heard or known of such. On their first arriving from Africa in any colony of civilised life, they at once see the superiority of their condition there to what they were—are extremely docile and tractable, and most eager to do just what those around them do—are quite delighted with every novelty, and all that is necessary for them is kindness, with determined, unwavering firmness. If they only become attached to mistress or master, they are most easily managed by love. And this law of love is, in fact, the one great power that conquers every obstacle in this world, and subdues to God every heart. Would that it were more strictly followed! Let it be your guiding principle through life, my child; love God, and love all His creatures for His sake.

“And with regard to these poor Africans, all those who have this spirit of love in their hearts should remember these words—

“‘Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’

“‘Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.’

“‘Except ye do penance, ye shall all likewise perish.’

“‘Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you.’

“And never forget that, having gained so much ourselves by Christianity, it is incumbent on us, one and all, to embrace every means within our power to save

the souls of these our fellow-creatures. If we wish to imitate our Blessed Saviour, we have no better opportunity. Can we love our Lord, or do we love our neighbour, while we are content to let them perish for the lack of that bread which gives them life?

“‘This is my commandment,’ said Jesus our Lord, ‘that ye love one another as I have loved you.’ Do we love all men as Christ has loved us? Do we thirst for their salvation as He did? Do we do by them as we would be done by?”

“And how they do look up to and love their mistresses and masters, mama! I am sure they think you something like a real angel, for you can manage them completely. The other day, don’t you remember, when Phrasine and Clotilde were fighting so dreadfully, directly you ran out to them and put your hand on Clotilde’s shoulder, saying, ‘Dear Clotilde, stop—don’t do so—God sees you—Christians mustn’t fight,’ she turned and dropped on her knees and began to cry, and said, ‘O missis! me so sorry!’ Then Phrasine seemed ashamed, and they both began to explain and tell you all about it.

“I was so frightened, mama, when you went out, for they looked like tigers, biting each other and tearing each other’s hair, and I was afraid they would hurt you. But when you had the cold water brought to bathe their foreheads, and wrapt up their wounds in linen, all the time telling them it was so very sad to hurt each other so, and the tears ran

down your face at seeing it, they looked at you with so much love and reverence that all their passion seemed to fade away. And then, when you told them they must pray very hard to God to forgive them for being so wicked as to fight, they became friends again. When you talked to their husbands, Germain, and that other very ugly man, and told them to take more care of their wives, how they thanked you !”

“ It is a very great blessing to me to feel that I have been allowed, by coming here, to be useful to them in some way. Should your lot be cast among them as mine has been, my child, I trust you will always remember your parents’ feeling that it is one of the heaviest responsibilities white men have, and for which they will have to answer—the love and the care with which they have treated their black brethren, if for no other reason than their inferiority, yet, above all, for the sake of bringing them to Christ.

“ But now to return to what led us to talk on the subject at all—the robe for Babet’s baby. I wish to have it baptized as soon as possible, for there has been already too long a delay. Let me see how much more there is to do, and if I can help you, for I have finished the cap and hood long ago.”

“ Oh, thank you, mama ! Do pray help me ; I am so tired of it—all this open work is so tiresome. It is so difficult for a little girl like me, and it is nothing to you ; you do it so quickly.”

“ But what a reward it will be to see Babet’s face of



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delight when her baby has it on! And she is such a good, faithful creature, it is quite worth the trouble. I know it will make you very happy to feel you have given her such pleasure, and to hear papa say, 'That's my own good little girl!' I should not like you to have all this without knowing you had taken some trouble to earn it, and I am sure you would not yourself be at all satisfied about it, would you? When you were receiving praise you would be feeling that you had not taken much trouble, and had fretted and worried about it."

"What is the baby's name to be, mama?"

"Well, Babet tells me she would like it to be Anastasie."

"Oh, how fond they are of long, fine names! But it is very pretty, isn't it? How did she find it out? Ah! I see by your laughing you told her of a few long, pretty names, and she picked out this. You've a good taste, Mrs. Babet."

## CHAPTER III.

SIR ROMUALD DE MONTFORT had been appointed governor of the island from which these etchings are taken just a year before the general abolition of slavery, owing to the confidence placed in him by the English Government, who at such a critical time required men of sound judgment, firmness, gentleness, and great Christian forbearance, as well as a most upright, conscientious way of governing. He had distinguished himself highly in the service of his country, and been severely wounded at the battle of Waterloo when quite a young man. Having retired from the army a few years before this appointment, he had married a daughter of one of those staunch old English families who have remained steady to the Catholic faith through all the persecution and trial brought on them by the establishment of Protestantism in our beloved country, and the consequent desecration of every sacred temple.

What an amount of gratitude do we not owe to these noble scions of our race, who have stood firm and upright through all the tempests of the last three cen-

turies, like lofty pillars of a shattered edifice, too deeply bedded in the foundation to give way ; and thus solidly fixed, though bared to the winds and without protection, have now the honour of being found ready to support the roof which is once more allowed to be built up by the return of the glorious Church of our fathers to its native land !

Lucille, much younger than himself, had known him from childhood, and, deeply honouring his noble qualities, though he was not of her faith, had yielded to his entreaties, and bound herself to him by promise some years before he felt he could with justice retire into private life and claim her for his bride. The one hope of her heart in giving this consent was to be able to bring him into the Church. To see him a Catholic before his death would, she felt, amply repay her for all the self-sacrifice it would be to be tied to one who could not understand or enter into her worship. To win such a soul and such a heart as his was by nature, and present him to her Saviour, roused all the energy of her devoted spirit ; and, therefore, when he called upon her to fulfil her word, she was ready, carefully, however, extracting from him a binding contract that their children should be brought up Catholics.

This sudden call by his country to send him to the tropics startled Sir Romuald very much, and he hesitated, feeling that he could not take his wife to such a climate, and therefore was about to decline the honour. But Lady de Montfort was a noble English-

woman, as well as true and good wife, and could not shrink from any duty. Nothing, she said, would give her more pleasure than going with him, and helping in every way she could. The black negro was an object of special interest to her, and she considered it a high privilege to be allowed to labour among them.

Accordingly he gave in, and well indeed did she fulfil her task, though in carrying out her great work, her health, strength, and beauty had suffered much. But what was that when compared with the great store of reward laid up for her in heaven? What was that to the great increase in holiness and perfecting of her soul which all this self-sacrifice had obtained?

She went on from day to day performing the appointed task which each brought round, and every night was a resting-place on her journey homewards to the blessed shore where her work would go before.

Shortly after arriving in this colony a little baby girl was born to her, an object of the greatest admiration among her black friends.

It certainly was a very pretty child, fair and pink, like its mother, with a very sweet smile, telling of a loving spirit within—a chubby little face, with large blue eyes, but more particularly remarkable for a very small and well-formed mouth.

This feature was the great attraction with the negroes, as being so completely in opposition to their own large thick lips, and which is especially conspicuous in their babies. They used to exclaim in astonishment, and

declare that a moco \* would cover it; so this led to their calling the baby "Missey Mocomouth."

The giving nicknames is a particular propensity among the negroes, taking advantage of the smallest peculiarity for the purpose. Thus, in like manner, Sir Romuald, having a stiff leg from a shot in the knee at Waterloo, was styled by them "Jambe de bois;" and as it is the custom among them in their evening entertainments to compose songs, both words and tunes, on the current events of the day for the amusement of the company, they sang a song commemorating him.

He had very graciously won their hearts on his arrival by his good-nature and very amiable condescension, shaking hands with them, and having many kind words and deeds to distribute among them as they thronged round in a crowd when he landed with Lady de Montfort on his arm, winning for him as well as herself, by her sweet loving looks, the very cordial welcome with which he was greeted.

All this they wove into rhyme, making a long story of it, and setting it to a tune which could be danced to in their fashion, and ending each verse with—

"General de Montfort, jambe de bois,  
Waterloo après dix mois ;"

because they heard that he had been ten months re-

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\* A small coin, less than a sixpence, being the bit cut out of the centre of a "cut dollar," and its value nine dogs, or half of a three-bit piece, which is the quarter of a cut dollar.

covering from his wound, and then had only the stiff knee to walk with.

Their language was not generally, however, in clear French; having come from Africa, they mixed up their own native tongue a great deal with it; and having learned French from their masters and mistresses and the priests, who had taken such pains with them, they, in trying to understand what they expressed and make themselves clear in return, had in a manner concocted a sort of *mélange* which was in common use between them.

Lady de Montfort, in speaking good French to them, was not understood, while she found it most difficult to make out what the servants said in offering to be of use to her.

Little Ethna grew (as all babies will when healthy) very fast, to the great delight of her black nurse, who was most proud of what she declared to be the effects of her own good nursing and particular care, as well as the blessings she was always contriving to get from the priests on her charge. Annette took the baby always with her to the early morning mass, and then standing somewhere in the way, the priests would pass out to their house; the black woman, with her sweet little flower of a child, looking like a rosebud in her arms, always attracted their notice, and in this way she obtained her object.

Lady de Montfort was very grateful, and loved the good Annette for her care and devotion; but she was obliged to watch very carefully lest the child might be spoiled by injudicious over-indulgence.

As she grew in years, and her disposition opened out, there appeared much to cause great anxiety both for her happiness in this life and the attaining that perfection necessary to obtain the crown hereafter.

An over-supply, as it appeared, of warmth of heart, and a most extreme sensitiveness, threatened to make her life on earth one of pain; and, if not trained in the right direction, more likely to lead her out of the paths to glory than through them.

As a natural adjunct, this warmth of heart was accompanied with great craving for the preference of those she loved, and a certain amount of jealousy, which, though not altogether selfish—for selfishness was not one of her faults—yet caused great pain to herself if one she loved showed favour to another, or found it necessary to correct her.

The very smallest reproof from her mother brought copious tears and sobs, evidently causing such pain that it was always a matter of serious concern to that careful parent whenever she had to find fault.

Lady de Montfort rightly judged that the best way to uproot these evils was to plant the seeds of a deep religious devotion to her Heavenly Father and Saviour; to turn all the love of her spirit in that direction, and lead her to offer it up at the altar, so that she might lose the sense of value for earthly things, and find in that all-efficient source of love what alone could give a full return for her own.

And the little child had caught it with fire.

On being told of the Creator who had made all the beautiful things she so very much admired, who had given her all she had and all she loved, her ardent nature had thrilled with gratitude, and a devotion deep and strong in proportion was produced within her, together with such an acute sense of duty, and desire to please the great Almighty God who loved her so much, and was so good and merciful, that the result of this teaching was most satisfactory. But withal there sprang up, like a weed twining round this flower, the want of humility—a self-conscious pride about her sense of duty—a feeling of indignation at being thought unable to appreciate to the full the great love of God, and at being found wanting in returning it with all the fervour of which she was capable. The desire to be and do right so strongly urged her, the ardent wish to please first God, and then those He had given her on earth, so engrossed her, that it was the most intense pain to find herself wanting or to be found fault with. Thus pride took its root, and led her to be always making excuses, and being indignant with those who told her of her errors.

It would be, "Oh! dearest mama, I'm sure I could not be so naughty as you say;" and then with hysterical sobbing she would add, "You can't love me, or you would not find such fault with me."

Sentences like these often broke from her lips in the midst of her tears, and Lady de Montfort, who knew it was her great love for her child which made



her so eager in search of faults, had to bear this cross in her own meek way, and offered it up in penance.

The redeeming point, however, in Ethna was her love of truth, and this made her true to herself. A little reflection led her to see her faults, and as soon as seen they were atoned for, as far as she could. Nor did she in any way spare herself, but the impulsiveness of her nature was constantly leading her into fresh repetitions of the faults she so struggled with, and the as yet want of success in uprooting them made her begin to realise with her mother what a strife lay before her in trying to gain that which we must all aim at—"Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord."

The other side of this fair child was all brightness. A most light-hearted spirit gave her a more keen enjoyment of things than even most children generally. She would jump and dance from no other motive than giving vent to the joyous heart within her—bound over the savanna like the kids which browsed there—dart into one negro hut after the other, with a merry word and laugh for every inmate.

She loved to stand on the brow of the hill till the breeze, not content with travelling through her hair as if tearing it away, seemed determined on catching her up to be part of itself. Then rush through the coffee-fields, spring over the brook, and be back again before Annette could miss her.

"Naughty shild, where you come from? Oh, see

me make you hair so beautiful! Now, look, he all tumble up. Wha massa go say? He go say, Annette, wha fa you no do you work? Wha fa you no dress missey proper? Den wha me go do? Ah! must have patience—me neber see one shild so. Eh, yah, must ha patience.”

Such exclamations as these were of very constant occurrence with the good patient nurse without having the least effect. Ethna patted her cheek, coaxed, won a smile, and that was enough.

Lady de Montfort was very particular about early rising, and had trained the child to this, though it was hardly necessary, so great was the energy of her spirit.

As she grew older, a little room was given to her entirely to herself. Annette rebelled very much, and pleaded so hard to be allowed to lay her mattress on the floor just inside the door, that for a short time it was consented to. It was a funny plea to make, “in case little missey should be ill,” when Ethna never had a headache, and the room was close to Lady de Montfort’s dressing-room, with a bell in it to summon mama, if she were needed; but the kind loving nurse must be considered and petted a little, so she had her way.

It was to this dear little room, so sacred to her for many reasons, that Ethna so very often turned in memory during the whole remainder of her life. It was in this room she so often woke up to find Annette kneeling upright on her mattress at prayer with her beads in hand and head raised up, looking through the half-

open jealousies to the clear moonlit skies, as if she expected to be able to peer into heaven.

If some of those in England who revel in their own superiority could have seen her as Ethna saw her, they would crave a little, I think, for some of the humble, meek, devout spirit possessed by the poor black African, Annette. It was Ethna's wont, as a rule, to rise at "Gun-fire," \* but quite as often it would be before, when still dark ; for she enjoyed so very much to see the stars disappear and the moon sink away. With scarcely anything on but her night-dress, she would open the casement and lean out while the sweet morning zephyr wafted in upon her ; counting star after star go out of sight, and looking for the grey dawn as it peeped forth, each loved tree and shrub becoming more distinct as it grew lighter. The fireflies, which had darted about through the night, now hiding themselves, and the birds gradually taking wing and beginning to chirp.

Then she began to follow their example. The bath prepared by Annette the night before by putting jasmine and orange flowers in the water, and placing the tub in the open air to catch the dew and so increase its freshness, was brought in.

She plunged about in this and sponged for about ten minutes, and then it did not take long to complete her

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\* It was a practice in this island to fire off a cannon from the fort every day at five o'clock in the morning and at eight again in the evening, which regulated the time for all those who had no clocks or watches, or could not understand them.

toilet; a shake of the head, and well brushing it through, was all found necessary to put in order hair which was already dressed by nature's twining.

And then, leaving Annette to her other duties, she sallied forth while yet the dew was dripping, first to see the cows milked, for good black Noel, the cowherd and milkman, was always anxiously looking at this hour for his "dear little missey" to appear, that he might give her a drink of the best part of the milk. From there to the fowl-house to help feed the chickens, and this done to the rabbit-hutch, where there were many waiting to eat out of her hand. Thence to the sheep-pen,\* after that the turtle-cistern, the crapaud-tank, and crab-barrel—seeing everything fed being her especial pleasure.

When this was done, she took basket and scissors and roved among the flowers to cull bouquets for her mother, whom she expected every moment to join her.

The watchful cook, Chloe, would follow her with roasted plantains, tempting her to eat.

"You go weary yourself, missey; me bring you some plantains, eat them. Missis go vex wen she see you, you go weary yourself. You nebber stan' still, you go weary."

"Oh! you good creature. I'll eat your plantains,

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\* Sheep are never in good order for the butcher in this climate unless put up in a shady pen or stable, and fed upon the vines which luxuriantly twine about the trees and shrubs in a wild state, and which forms better food for them than even the rich savanna herbage.

but I'm not tired a bit. I mean to go into the coffee fields before breakfast-time; I want some blossoms for my bouquets, they are so sweet. Nonsense about weary. I shall have to sit still at lessons, and work, and drawing, and music by and by, so I must have a good run while I can."

And putting on a negro hat to protect her from the rising sun, and save the displeasing dear mama, she dashed off with bound after bound, leaving Chloe in despair and astonishment, clapping her hands, with—

"Eh, yah, me nebber see one shild like dat."

Taking care to be home again in time to make up the bouquets before mama appeared, it was her desire to be ready so as to get the first kiss on meeting her. Ah, yes! here was the fault again; it was not only the dear mama's morning kiss—but the first kiss—the kiss of preference, the kiss which would mark her as the favourite that she longed for. The other children did not seem to care at all about this, so she satisfied herself that there was nothing selfish in it.

She would take any trouble to get this kiss of special love, this smile of commendation, this word of praise, these thanks. At first sight this does not seem a fault; but look at it well, and you will see that it is one.

Could she not have felt all this love, and taken all this trouble to show it, without such an eager, such a jealous coveting of the fullest return? Could she not have been content to labour for the object of her love, to be satisfied with making every sacrifice to

serve and gratify, without this ardent desire? Could she not have lived on the knowledge of a deep affection—even if it had been smaller, perhaps, than her own—without such a craving for the fullest, deepest manifestation of it? Because her own poor little heart was so very warm, so very full, that her keenest pleasure was in serving and pleasing those she loved—must it follow—could she not be satisfied without the same from others to herself?

At any rate, it was the germ of what in after life, and through her life, was the source of constant trouble, the cause of many and many a deep sorrow, the result of having been led by this feeling into the sins of upbraidings, unkindness and pain from disappointments. And when in after years the higher life became her object, the close copying of the Blessed Mother, and the self-abnegation which the doing so required—all this, and all the sins it led to in consequence, made the strife for perfection, which was her aim, almost, she feared, a hopeless task, a goal never to be arrived at by *her*. Nevertheless, with all the energy and perseverance of her nature, she still hoped on.

Had she been more humble, had she but had a deeper sense of her own worthlessness, the attaining this would have been comparatively easy; but she was a first child, terribly petted by a very proud father, together with an almost adoring black nurse, who had not contributed to make her feel worthless, but rather the reverse. She had been taught to think

herself of consequence; to feel that she was a treasure beyond price to them.

Very beautiful, very lovable and winning, clever and bright, with a noble, truthful, generous, open, and honest disposition, everything surrounding her had contributed to foster the very reverse of humility.

Can it be wondered at that pride should be one of her faults, and that striving to be humble was the most difficult thing to do?

One does not mean the outward semblance of humility, the humble, gentle manner—this is very easily attained as an accomplishment, because so amiable and worthy of admiration—but the real, true humility of the inner life, the humility of soul which is the groundwork of perfection, the kernel of holiness.

It was just at this age—the age of bounding, wild pleasure, of endless rounds of joys without alloy, save those of her own creating by the faults which beset her—that her director in the spiritual life, wishing to improve the good and overcome the evil, thought it well for her to have some little work of self-sacrifice, something to do for those she did not love, which would give her trouble and which she did not like to do—a work that would require the giving up some time she wished to spend in another way, and which was to be done purely to show her love to God.

He therefore arranged for her to read three times a week in the evening to the negroes, just at the hour when it was her great pleasure to be sitting at her

mother's feet, listening to her music, her song, or loving, gentle words.

The negroes were delighted, and looked forward to their evenings with eagerness. In truth, it was a pretty picture—the lovely child of eleven on her stool, with the black men, women, boys, and girls all squatted on the ground around her, looking up with listening ears, wondering at her graceful, fluent reading, and taking in all she read.

This was a real work of self-sacrifice for Ethna, but her good nature made her do it graciously; and it was the beginning of the work of her life, by which her faults were to be overcome.

Her mother, too, who had taught her to embroider on white cambric, arranged robes and caps for the negro babies, which were to be presented on their baptism.

For a little work of recreative indulgence, she was allowed to paint for her father's toilet-table a court-plaster case, each fold of which contained a lovely native flower of the island. She selected and gathered one, placed it in a tumbler of water, and then copied it very cleverly for a child.

Happy, happy little girl! make the most of the precious hours—they fly away so fast, and they will never, never return to you. By and by, when troubles and griefs attack you, and struggles with yourself to master and uproot the evil and nourish the good shall come with overwhelming force, you will look back upon these sweet days—these bright, happy, sunny days—



38 *Ethna ; or, Etchings in Black and White.*

and, oh ! how you will wish them back again. When they are gone for ever, what a treasure the recollection of them will be, and how you will wish you had valued them more than you did—that you had cherished every hour as it flew, and stamped every moment with the pencil of memory on your heart.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE eagerly looked-for steamer came in during the night—one of those still, clear, beautiful nights of the tropics, which are very nearly as bright as day—so bright that you can really see without difficulty to read in the open air. The sea was deeply blue, and shining with phosphorus, as the vessel made its way into port.

Sir Romuald was on deck; he caught sight of his dear peaceful home as they passed the nook through which it was visible, and whence, had she been on the watch, his wife might have seen him pass; but it was twelve o'clock at night, and he would have been almost angry had she been there.

He landed in the boat which took the mail on shore, the waves just dashing gently on the beach.

The postmaster had to be knocked up, though the gun which usually fired on the arrival of the steamer had not been forgotten, the sentinel on watch at the fort having duly attended to his duty.

The servants at Government House, feeling very impatient for the arrival of their "good massa," and thinking it most likely "he would come before break

of day," had not gone to rest. The venerable butler, Henry (who had been brought from Africa as a boy, and taught to read, made a good Catholic, as well as trained for a servant, by his first master and mistress) was the most faithful creature in the world—one who thought he could never show enough gratitude to those who cared for him and treated him so kindly; Louis the footman, a younger African, who prided himself on speaking better English than the others, and who "always did his best endeavors to please massa an' missis;" Johnnie the page, son of old Henry, or Uncou Henry, as he was called, were therefore all on the watch.

They were rewarded for their pains, for he came; and great was their joy when Sir Romuald himself was so gratified at their being so attentive.

"Ah, massa, de missis go too glad, he good fou tell um first befor you go."

"Yes, my good Henry. I must get you to do this; I'll just write a few lines for you to start with as soon as day breaks. Will you go, my good man?"

"Yes, massa, 'me go berry glad;' me go make you one glass saugaree, an' den a we go sleep to gun fire."

Annette and old Noel had both heard the gun announcing the arrival of the steamer, but would not say a word in case massa had not come in it.

Ethna, too, had heard it; and feeling sure papa was come, not for a moment thinking of the possibility of a disappointment, had risen while it was yet dark;

but not caring this morning for looking at the stars, had dressed very quickly and gone out, her object being to make triumphal arches where it was possible, under which papa would have to pass. She soon got together pretty creeping vines and flowers, and with the assistance of some negro boys, who cut for her some bending bamboos, she soon finished her task, having succeeded in making two very pretty, one over the gate opening from the road into the savanna (or park), and the other over the gate of the choice garden leading up to the porch of the house.

She then attended to all her pets, and filled the flower vases. Having done, and finding breathing time, she began to feel very impatient. This was relieved, however, by Annette coming and showing her the note Henry had brought from papa, to tell her of his arrival in the night, and would soon be with them.

Oh! what joy. How Ethna's heart yearned to bound down the hill and run along the road to town till she met him. She knew if she did so, papa would catch his darling up in his arms and so take her home. She would then have the first kiss, his first embrace—she would be the first to see him; but no! her dearest, precious mother, she should be the one to have that pleasure; Ethna would not take that from *her*.

There was a sweet little arbour in the garden which she had covered herself with some of her favourite creepers, by planting their seeds round the posts, and then training them up, and this was her favourite place

of retreat for learning lessons, having a little private chat with her doll, or reading some pretty new book.

As the blossoms of these creepers were peculiarly sweet they used to be a great attraction to the humming birds, and it was her great delight to sit and watch their tameness, for they never seemed to heed her, but would come buzzing about, and dart into the flowers quite near her, then having satisfied themselves with the honey would dart away again, to be succeeded by others seeking the same thing.

To this place, therefore, she retired on this momentous morning in her state of restlessness and impatience. It overlooked the road, and she would thus be the first to see him, without taking anything away from another.

Not long had she to wait in suspense. Presently, just emerging from the trees at the turn of the road, on his favourite grey, the dear, revered, well-known figure appeared.

Ethna clapped her hands and jumped in wild delight; and, indeed, it was difficult to control herself so far as to prevent the impulse of rushing to him at once.

Firmly, however, did she do it, strongly and determinedly did she wait, giving vent to her feelings by exclamations of delight to her darling birds.

After a little while she heard her name called—papa's own voice! Then, indeed, was her turn, and she bounded away up the slope to meet him coming in search of her where he expected to find her—in the little harbour called hers, because she liked to be there alone.

She sprang into his arms, snuggled her head on his shoulder, with her wee hands clasped tight round his neck, and the restraint she had laid on herself burst forth in hysterical sobs.

For a few moments he pressed her tightly to his bosom till she became calm, and then as she looked up and gazed into his eyes, he said, "Why did you not come before you were called, my child?"

"Because, papa, I wanted mama to meet you first, and have your first kiss. But I was in the arbour to see you come, and could hardly keep away. And I made the arches over the gates."

It was indeed a moment of intense happiness to Lady de Montfort, as she exclaimed, "My darling!" standing there beside her safely-returned husband, to hear her child tell of her first conquest over self.

His arrival had so quickly followed the delivery of his note to her by Annette, that she had scarcely time to collect herself and prepare to meet him—the longed-for one returned at last! She never doubted but that Ethna would be in the way, and never thought to call her. The mere delight of his being come for the moment all engrossed her, and not till her husband asked for their child did she heed her absence.

Was it, indeed, as complete a piece of self-mastery as Lady de Montfort thought—would Ethna have done this for any else than her mother? Not yet; it was not, indeed, so completely an unselfish act as it appeared. Her love for her mother made it always a

great pleasure to give up anything to her, or do anything by which she would be gratified or pleased. Still there was a manifest spirit of self-sacrifice—a calm, firm, self-restraint, which bid fair in the child for a self-conquering woman by and by.

The two little boys came clinging on to his knees. Gratefully thankful, indeed, did Sir Romuald feel for his safe return, while the beaming tinge of unalloyed joy lighted up the countenance of Lady de Montfort with a smile which had not shone there since his departure.

“How d’ye me, massa?” (with a bob of the head). “How d’ye me, massa?” (with a sort of jump down for a curtsy). “How d’ye me, massa? A’ we so glad fou see you come back ’gen,” was heard on every side, as one black face after the other came peeping in round the open doors and windows. “Eh! you get quite rosy. Yah! you come quite stout—me so glad. You go gi’e a’ we holiday to-day, no me, massa?”

“Two days, willingly, my kind friends,” said Sir Romuald, shaking hands with them all. “I am very glad indeed to come back to you again; and I cannot thank you enough for taking such care of your mistress as you promised me to do. Go and have two days of good merry-making; we will send you some nice things for your supper, and I have brought you some presents.”

“Eh! yah, yah, yah! Thank ’ee me, massa; thank ’ee me, massa; bless ’ee me, massa.”

The distribution of the presents was the cause of great delight. Knowing their tastes, he had selected the most bright and gaudy chintzes he could find for their long training robes when in full dress—gay checked Madras kerchiefs for their fanciful turbans, and some showy trinkets in the shape of earrings and beads for their neck. When Lady de Montfort showed them some beautiful pearls brought for her, they fancied their massa had been more bountiful to them than his own wife, because their gifts were so much more showy and bright.

They soon began to beat the “tum-tum,” shake the “shock-shock,” and yell their dance song, sounds which never fail in a short time to assemble a large party in a ring, to take each their turn in the rude figures, jumps, and contortions which they go through in the wildest manner, but which seems to afford them much more pleasure than any of our assemblies for the dance ever do.

When Sir Romuald and Lady de Montfort went in the evening of this first day to be present at their dance for a little while, taking with them baskets of cakes, sweets, and punch, the applause with which they were greeted, in the shape of shouts, bows down to the ground, jumps and twists, and lifting up of hands, singing complimentary phrases to their impromptu tunes, yells and shakes of the “shock-shock,” was most deafening, and would have been almost alarming and painful, but that they were so well



acquainted with the rude simplicity and still half-barbarous nature of the people to whom they had contributed so much enjoyment.

Yet, reader, let me add here that, barbarous as this description may appear to you, I can testify that very seldom, and this only by chance, does any case of drunkenness ever make part of these revelries. The (to us refined ones) absurd way of showing their joy is simply the effervescence of the light-hearted, careless spirit giving vent to the glad feelings within them.

When tired out they go to their beds like children fatigued with romping, and rise again in the morning like children ready again for their infantine sports.

Compare this with the selfish, brutish, devilish way of recreation common among our so-called *civilised* lower class, and say which best deserves the name of barbarous or savage.

Though I have spent years among these people in the West Indies, never once do I remember ever seeing a woman in the very *least* way the worse for anything in the shape of drink. Indeed, they never think of taking wine or spirit of any shape except as medicine.

Rum is the only thing the men ever take, and this they only learn to do from the bad example set them by the *white civilised* soldiers quartered near them, the sailors on coming ashore, or the Scotch and English overseers and managers of estates, who seem to find pleasure in thus leading them into doing what, if left to themselves, they never would do. When the men

are very much heated with some very toilsome employment and are thirsty, a little rum is necessary in the water, for water alone in such a case would make them ill. This spirit is made by them in these islands from the molasses, or droppings from the new sugar.

They are very fond of punch made of the rum, and this seems a natural beverage, as the limes, lemons and citrons all grow wild in the hedges, and the juice of these is necessary to health in the tropics; but, as a rule, they never indulge or get tipsy on it, and only take it in a small glass, as we do in England a choice wine.

Syrup and water, coffee, manby, lemonade, and chocolate, are drinks with the men as well as the women. The nurses are especially clever in the concoction of numerous "tisans" made from various herbs, leaves, and roots, and which very often are more efficacious in curing the disorders to which they are subject than the medicine prescribed by doctors.

'Tis true the men sometimes get into the habit of liking a glass of rum and water, and are pleased if, after a little labour for you, it is given them, and sometimes, after having been injudiciously indulged in this way, will, of course, be more or less excited; but the drinking for drinking's sake, as we see so constantly among our men and, alas! our women too—the becoming such dreadfully degraded creatures as do our men and women, by giving themselves up to this horrid sin, is never known.

Only be it remembered that I am writing of Africans who have been carefully taught the true faith by priests and good practical Catholic masters and mistresses, for my experiences have been among these and the fresh savage from Africa *alone*.

My dear, simple-hearted Africans! what a pleasure it has been to me, after teaching you out of all your savage ways, to watch the pure refinement growing which springs from a freshly-made Christian soul, first realising to itself the great God above whose love takes care of all, first striving to show a return for that love, and first rejoicing in the feeling of comfort in civilised customs and habits, as well as showing warm gratitude to those who teach them.

Their pure, simple, devoted love, sacrificing every comfort, giving up every pleasure, and seeming as if they could never do enough to show their love for you, when put in contrast with the selfish, sordid, low wickedness of our common order of people, puts to shame indeed our boasted superiority—cries, indeed, to Heaven against those in whose power it lies to make good Catholic Christians of these despised people. We hear them called with contempt black devils, cruel monsters, so very savage, but I never heard of such a case as murdering a mistress, and cutting her up and boiling her to hide guilt, for the sake of getting her gold, and such cases as one hears of in our boastful country. But if they are cruel, why is it? Because they are not Christians. And how can they be Chris-

tians if not taught? Whose duty is it to teach them?

Are they more cruel than were the ancient heathen Romans, or any others who persecuted Catholics from the first—even in the times of the Thirty Years' War? Do they practise greater cruelties than did some of the heretics against the Church, as the Arians?—all of which made some of our most glorious martyrs.

The happy Africans such as I knew them, the newly-made Catholic African comes out, indeed, in beautiful contrast against those of our land; the brutish, sottish drunkards who pawn everything, even clothes, to get drink—and will drink, do what you may—degrade themselves down to a much more savage state than the poor untaught black.

Oh, you who talk with such contempt of savage life, just search and find out what and where it really is; and then strive, if you will, with every energy in your power, to do away with it.

Think too, and find out thoroughly, what true Christianity is—for though decoration, music, and all that is lovely and of our best, is necessary, and our bounden duty to offer, is this alone Christianity?

Can that man or woman be truly called a Christian, truly be said to love our Lord, really aspiring for a happy eternity in heaven, who will be indifferent to these things? Is it enough to join in all worship, assist at Mass, give liberally towards the funds for building churches, or any public charities or societies,

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and yet not take trouble to convert the heathen and remedy all these crying evils? give no heed whatever to the poor widow reduced by change in circumstances from the affluence in which she was reared, by the cruelty, dishonesty, or recklessness of those on whom she is dependent—unable to earn anything from ill-health, and therefore in such suffering and poverty as to make her days one endless struggle against care and want? or turn away from the orphan and friendless, whose souls have to be led in the paths of truth and holiness, and their bodies kept from starvation?

Alas! for England, wealthy England, with her empire extending all over the world, this sort of thing happens every day, and every hour of the day. Those who have wealth find luxury and amusement so necessary to them that they are unable “to love their neighbour as themselves.” Happily, there are many who will not believe this,—the young, before they have entered on the rude wilderness which will reveal it to them; and the noble, high-minded, and unselfish natures,—but any one with only a small experience of life must confess it.

It would be a great consolation to the pain with which the writer brings this before the public, if the effect of reading it by one conscious of a particle of the style of religion here referred to, should be led into altering it, and learn to feel with self-abasement that the poor untaught heathen savage may be preferred

before him, "for unto whom much is given, of them will be much required."

How will any one be able to give account for the souls *lost* for the want of exertion on their part—for not ministering the cup of cold water, which they might do if they knew who were thirsty? The poor wretch, driven mad from starvation, care, and trouble—first, as the result of bodily want, and next, that Christian teaching which would make him bear such a cross with resignation and joy for his Saviour's sake.

And yet I am not speaking merely of the very poor: for them there is a kind of sensational and fashionable charity astir which produces care for them to a great extent. The expensively-dressed young lady will take great trouble and pleasure sometimes in visiting among these, inflicting them very often with needless intrusions. All sorts of charitable amusements, bazaars, balls, amateur theatricals and concerts are got up, which excite and interest those who take part in them, and those also who come to buy or look on; while at the same time those who most need the *love* of their fellow-creatures are in distress of mind, in want of a little sympathy, a particle of human friendship, a kind word or a smile to cheer them on in some hard beaten track of duty—they who go on from day to day grinding at some most trying work in distressing positions, but look around in vain for that love, that sweet sympathising charity, which would smooth and per-

haps make the rough way easy. They yearn and hope for this, but turn only to see their neighbours all engaged in their own selfish, and very often foolish, and even sinful pursuits—squandering carelessly that money which would save them, perhaps, from bankruptcy, bitter want, and hard toil ; labour, such as saps away all cheerfulness, making of them kind of automatons, and turning the sufferings of illness into rack and torture. They hope for and ask in vain the help of the rich, who are so wrapt up in their own thoughts, desires, wishes, pleasures, that they have no time to stop to listen to a wail—no moment to lose—no will to give the little help over a tide of sorrow waving in with dash after dash to crush.

Will not He who says, "Love your neighbour as yourself," expect an account for this ?

Think of the broken heart which might have lived on and on, and got the better of its trials, by the help of one kind friend, one friend in need.

Ponder over the destroyed soul which might have conquered self, resisted sin, and striven hard till at last it gained the portals of heaven by the guidance of one strong arm, but lost only from the want of it.

Oh ! you English—you happy, wealthy, English people—you civilised, refined, and highly-educated sons and daughters of the British soil, the kingdom whose possessions circle the world—you who profess Christianity and deep religion in such very audible

terms—can you be guilty of all this? Can you be satisfied with such a cold, phlegmatic kind of vegetating life?—read all the descriptions of barbarous, heathen, savage life, which is so *only* from being untaught in the sweet rule of the Gospel?—hear of all the dreadful deeds of wickedness, and do nothing to stop it?—comment on all the sins of the age, take care to avoid being as bad yourself, but rest here satisfied?

It would be well for those who are so wrapt up in luxury and ease that they cannot feel for others, to go away to some distant colony where, exiled from their home, they would be thrown together man with man, and rank with rank—where hard necessity would compel one to be dependent on the other's kindness for their need. They would then realise to themselves what the love of one's neighbour really is; where money is of no use, love is more valuable; and they would come back, as all who have been thus expatriated do, with more real religion in their heart, and feel how very wanting in this respect the English are—who excuse themselves with the high-flown word of Independence!

They would be struck with the fact—which on their return home would stare them in the face, but to which the every-day life people seem blind—of how the poor unfortunate ones have to struggle on in the very depths of intense misery, while the very rich are rolling in luxury of every kind, and care not for them that it is so.



Like Dives they do not feel—they cannot see that the trial of misery inflicted on these their fellow-creatures was for the very purpose of testing *their* charity, their love, and their stewardship of the good things entrusted to their care, and for which they will have to give an account.

Arrived at a certain acclivity of high cultivation of intellect, of moral and respectable religion, of refinement in manners and habits, and of social intercourse, to so far an extent as to afford them pleasure—such a degree of charity and kindness as does not interfere with their own welfare, interests, comforts, and happiness as they call it, they are satisfied, and forget—totally forget—that there is a higher standard for them far, even that at which all may arrive who are really in earnest and striving hard to attain it—Perfection; for He who bids us to be perfect would not have done so if it were not possible.

Surely a little reflection will show us that if there is one way more likely to lead to this than another, it is to cast away pride and to be loving one to another.

In this respect the Englishman who boasts and wraps himself up in self-congratulation about his superiority, may with great benefit take a lesson from the simple ignorant Quashie.

Such remarks as these may, it is hoped, be pardoned, as coming from one who has lived for many years among these people, and who, accustomed to their pure, instinctive, natural kindness of heart, such as is implanted within

us by our Maker, and which would always act, if not twisted out of shape by the stiff conventionalities, the pride and the selfishness which worldliness and worldly habits bring about, is struck most forcibly by all she notices in this respect on returning home.

There seems to her no doubt that all the spirit of republicanism now rampant—the strikes among labourers, the rebellious and rude feeling prevailing in the lower order, and the eagerness for equality—is all owing to the want of love and care on the part of the rich and prosperous towards them.

It is not foreign to the nature of the lower order to look up with respect and love to those above them; but, on the contrary, wherever this is deserved, it is always given.

Were the nobles and the rich always gracious, always kind and gentle, ever ready to help, and to look after the happiness, the welfare, and the necessities of those beneath them, there would be no grudging to them of their wealth. Did the rich always treat the poor with that courteous civility which is due from one immortal soul to another, they would always have the same in return.

Were the rich constantly endeavouring to act as stewards of their Maker in the riches entrusted to their care—looking out carefully for real want and relieving it—encouraging the industrious, reproving the lazy by their own example—going among the poor and making friends of them—providing for their teaching, civilisa-

tion, improvement, and comforts of every kind—instead of putting them away out of sight in union workhouses, they would be loved and revered, and the influence they might attain would surely be tremendous. Vice and wickedness of every kind, melting away under this sunny power, would soon disappear altogether; peace and harmony, good-will, religion, and content reign in its stead.

There need be no necessity at all for the rich to deprive themselves of their refined enjoyments or recreative amusements, but surely there is no necessity to spend their whole time in them; no reason at all to give indiscriminately, whenever and wherever they are called upon, but a positive duty to inquire well into every case that comes before them, and then to relieve it from the store which is committed to their keeping.

The poor are placed in the land for this purpose, and woe is it to them who will not understand it.

Should such a calamity come upon England as fell on France a short time ago, the cause would be the faults of the rich, their selfishness, and recklessness, much more than the grumblings of the mob, because it is their very faults which excite the discontent.

Can there be anything more inciting to rebellion than the case of a poor, industrious, honest labouring man, who, having a large family, works hard from six in the morning till six at night for a pittance, just enough to keep his ever busy wife, his children, and himself from

starving, and who from illness or want of work is really without bread, to see a careless prince or lord lolling away his time at billiards all day long, smoking, and tossing about his gold as if of no value, spending it on every piece of self-indulgence he can think of, and then, if the poor starving man beg for a few pence, he is asked, "Why he is not at work?" "Why, then, is he not in the poorhouse?" "Why does he come begging?" is turned away from, and repulsed, called an impostor, and so forth.

Let those who are possessed of two or three thousand pounds a week ponder well on what they will have to answer for—on the case of a widow living near, who is turned out of her house, and all her furniture and treasures sold, for the lack of one hundred! when with all her industry, and all her saving, she has not been able to collect enough for the purpose of preventing this.

They would not have missed one hundred pounds, and often spend it on a bauble. They might have saved her, and *did not*.

Were the lower order of England less the slaves of hard toil, poverty, and care, we should have more nobleness of spirit, more real worthiness of character than we have. There would be none of that passing by and not doffing the hat to those above them in station; no secret meetings, and underhand stratagems, to undermine authority.

Had the peasantry and labourers in the several hard

working manufactories a holiday on every festival of the Church, instead of at the most but two or three granted by Act of Parliament, there might be lighthearted joyousness in their dwellings, instead of the sordid care which drowns itself in drink.

Did the masters in trade, the owners of the factories, the farmers, and all others pay the people they employ at a little higher rate, there would be more equal distribution of the wealth of the land. We should not hear of such a thing as the inventor of a machine having amassed a most incredible fortune, while those who made them for him remained still as poor as ever. It is the monopoly of wealth and the selfishness of the wealthy which creates discontent and rebellion.

Why should the poor man's life be such a very hard one in order to earn his bread, so that he has no time for the care of his soul; no hour to bestow on the cultivation of his mind? Different ranks of life there must be—God has ordered it so, it always has been so, and always will be; but there is no reason why the lower orders should be so very burdened, and no cause but the selfishness of the higher.

“The poor shall never cease out of the land,” but they are there as objects for mercy to the rich, and that the love for our neighbour may be exercised.

It is in the power of the wealthy and of those in authority to alter this, but they do not; sad will it be if they have to answer for it, as there can be no doubt that numberless are the souls which have been lost by it.

. Happily, however, and most gratefully must it be recorded, there are many of the noble rich who are the very reverse of what is spoken of here, but their numbers are small in comparison. Their names should be written in *letters of gold*, and placarded in every public place, for they are the leaven of the land—the one thing which keeps the whole mass from putrefaction. They are the ten righteous who keep the country from destruction.

It was not at all likely that Ethna should be forgotten by her fond parent when he brought presents to others; and to her great delight there came a beautiful little well-trained creole pony, named “Gipsy,” for her, on which she was to learn to ride, and an exquisite tiny whip with gold head, chain, and ring, to attach it safely to her finger, so that there could be no danger of dropping it—habit, and hat, and all complete. Papa was going to teach her himself, and take her for rides with him; and she might look forward to having a canter or trot with mama as well some day.

This was what she had been long wishing for. There really never was a more happy little girl than Ethna on this joyous day of her father’s return home.

## CHAPTER V.

THE Governor could not remain more than a day or two after his return in the quiet of his home. Business had to be attended to, and there were levees and drawing-rooms to be held. Then entertainments must follow, and after so long a quiet time they must be frequent. So Gomier was left for a while, and they all went to town for this purpose. Annette was always very important at these times, as all the children were then more particularly under her care, mama not having as much time to devote to them, for open house from the hour of breakfast till late in the evening was the result of being at Government House.

Very often before breakfast would a salute from some vessel entering the port startle them as the announcement of some embassy from a neighbouring island belonging to another nation, and the consequence was half-a-dozen foreign officers to breakfast, and then to be entertained for several days.

The English ships of war too, coming in for supplies of water and fruit, at any time when least expected; and then all the officers on board being so glad to get

on shore, could not be content to go away without a ball, two or three dinner parties, and plenty of riding about in the country among the hills. Very soon after the first drawing-room a ball was given. At this ball Ethna had to appear for an hour, a thing quite out of all order, for she was only eleven years old ; but papa's one weakness was his delight in her, and he liked to show her to his friends.

Annette was very happy about this, and dressed her in white muslin just below her knees, with blue sash, and coral necklace ; blue kid shoes with sandals displayed to advantage her dainty little feet, and the sweeping hair of golden hue rolled in fresh ringlets with every movement.

She was led by her nurse to the door of the room where her mother was receiving her guests, but on arriving there would go no farther—the number of officers in full uniform, and the scene altogether, quite startled her. She put her little forefinger on her rosy lip, clutched Annette's hand more firmly, and turned hesitatingly, as if intending a retreat. Had her father not seen her, she probably would have done so, but he noticed her in time, and going to the door took her hand and led her proudly up to the end of the room to her mother.

Lady de Montfort noticed her agitation, and just put her hand gently on her head, while the ladies round noticed her with very injudicious and flattering speeches.



Seated on a stool at her mother's feet, however, she became soon more reconciled, and enjoyed looking on at the bewildering movements of the "Lancers Quadrilles," which, with the glittering of the ladies' jewels, and the officers' uniforms, had a very dazzling effect.

As is usual at balls in the West Indies, the negroes from all parts of the town took advantage of this for their evening amusement, to look on, as we do on going to a theatre, and collected in crowds at all the doors and open windows of the house, thrown open with as many rooms as possible. They collect with just as much coolness and sense of right as if they paid a guinea for their entertainment ; but no one ever thinks of interfering with them, for never on any occasion whatever do they forget themselves, become intrusive, or in any way transgress the rules of propriety. They make their remarks quite freely as to who dances best, looks best, and is in their opinion most pleasing, with constant exclamations of delight, full of interest and intense admiration of the "Buckra ladies'" dresses, and their style of dancing, but never for one moment caring to learn anything by which to improve their own.

Quite the contrary of this, nothing ever seems to inspire their own feet, but the wonderful tum-tum and bells to which they shake and twist about. Our dancing is to them beautiful to look at, but it has not half enough spirit to suit them.

They collect round the windows of the supper room

in the same way, just to amuse themselves with seeing how the "Buckras" act in taking supper. But though the most dainty delicacies may be provided, the choicest wines, and the richest plate displayed, never has there been known an occasion of any sort of theft at such parties, or, indeed, at any time. They are too simple to care for it—too good to wish to rob any one of what they possess; have too great a reverence for what belongs to another, and especially the "Buckras,"\* to attempt such a thing. They do not care for money, and have no means of turning such into money if they did.

Their simple pleasure adds, indeed, very much to the enjoyment of the guests in the ball-room, as they will clap their hands with delight at anything which takes place that they admire particularly.

Ethna would very likely have remained quietly for the hour in the ball-room enjoying the gay scene, but a very tall colonel caught the idea of taking her for a romping dance, and approached for this purpose.

Ethna turned with pale face to her mother, and said in great alarm, "Please, mama, may I go away?"

Lady de Montfort, bending graciously to the good-natured officer, said, "My little daughter is so oppressed with the honour you wish to confer on her, Colonel Beauchamp, that I must beg you to be kind enough to excuse her this once; and will you forgive her for being such a very foolish little thing? This is the first

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\* White people.

time she has appeared in public, and she is very timid."

"Oh, dear!" said Colonel Beauchamp, with a very polite bow, "I'm very sorry. I only thought to give her pleasure; but you'll shake hands with me, my little lady, and forgive me, won't you?"

Ethna clung more closely to her mother, but he took her hand in a very shy, frightened way. The colonel, taking it in his, lifted it to his lips in a most gallant style, saying, "Thanks to my little queen."

This was a great deal too much to bear, and it was most fortunate that Annette had posted herself at the door from the moment she gave Ethna up to her father in expectation of her wishing to retreat, and seeing Ethna's alarm, came forward to take her away.

The timid child was thus relieved, and she never forgot her first entrance to a ball-room.

The baptism of Babet's child was not forgotten, however, amidst all this gaiety. The Governor was so much engaged, and therefore deputed one of his aides-de-camp to escort Lady de Montfort and his little girl to the church.

The robe had been shown him, and he not only admired it very much, but was extremely pleased with Ethna's industry.

She then did indeed feel grateful to her mother for having been so particular about her thoroughly earning this, for it would have been very hard indeed to have

been obliged to confess that she had been impatient, or lazy, or unwilling, or not done it all herself.

Babet was most delighted with it, as well as the hood and cap. The baby looked as handsomely dressed as any negro, with all her ambition in this way, could possibly wish.

Lady de Montfort, who always tried to do every act of kindness in the most gracious way possible, was as particular about taking the baby and giving it to the priest herself as she had been with all her other god-children.

She named it Anastasie, as Babet wished, and spoke out her promises very audibly and reverently.

The baby behaved very well, and did not cry, and when they went into the sacristy to sign their names the kind priest spoke very encouragingly to Babet, commending her for the care she seemed to take of her child, and talked to her about her responsibility, now that she had a little Christian to bring up; and told her what she ought to do, promising to help her, and telling her not to mind coming to him about anything she wished to know, for he should not think it a trouble.

This pleased Babet very much, and she thanked him with one of her lowest bobs down to the ground.

All the negroes were entertained in the grounds of Government House by the servants.

Lady de Montfort tied a little silver medal round the baby's neck, and then they returned to their loved home among the hills.

Babet was as proud as she could possibly be, and very grateful too. To have a "white lady" as god-mother to their child is always a matter of ambition to the negro; in this case it was not only their much-loved mistress, but also the Governor's lady.

Were her black friends and companions envious of this? Not in the very least; they rejoiced and were glad with her, praised their good "massa and missis," and felt quite sure that the same kindness, or anything else they might need, would be as readily granted to them when they required it.

They had, of course, their merry dance in the evening, for no day of rejoicing could end without it; and Babet's husband made a very memorable speech on the occasion, to this effect—

"A' we go work well fou di good massa and missis. A' we go lub dem plenty. A' we go plant yam, petatae, an' maniock fou gie dem wen he come ripe. A' we go dry di coffee well, fou sen dey na Englan', cause den massa go get plenty money. Eh! he bery good massa dat." "Eh yah! eh yah!" was joined in by all the party present in assent, and away went the tumult with a grand chorus of yells.

Another event that had been awaiting the Governor's return was the marriage of one of his aides-de-camp, to a young lady who had arrived from England about a year before. She had come out to her father, who was a widower. As he was in the civil service, he

had a right to present his daughter at Government House.

Lady de Montfort, who in all these cases tried to act a mother's part, had taken the girl under her special protection, and it was owing perhaps to her having been by this so much brought in contact with the polished aide-de-camp that the engagement had taken place.

As the aide-de-camp was also a particular friend, the Governor and his wife took a great interest in them, and therefore the marriage was to take place under their auspices. The breakfast was to be at Government House, from whence they were to depart for the country-seat of the bride's father—not in a carriage and pair of white horses to meet the train, as with us now, but in a large canoe with awning, rowed by four black negro men, who would sing impromptu songs on the event all the way.

The young lady's father had provided her with an African maid. This may seem strange to English women. They will wonder how an African could possibly dress her mistress properly, arrange her hair, or be able to understand the thousand and one whims and wants which a lady's maid generally has to be *au fait* at.

They would wonder still more if they knew what a very *clever* maid an African girl will make, when taken early away from savage life, and domiciled in a good English or French family—taught, civilised, and taken pains with, as well as made a good Catholic.

But what is of more worth still, she makes the most faithful, loving, devoted maid, very far different and far above in character to the English maid, generally speaking, whose chief thought is her salary, her comforts, her privileges, and so forth, and who (though one thankfully owns there are many exceptions) will always leave a mistress, however kind, to go to another who offers greater advantages and higher remuneration.

The African maid becomes so attached, that whatever the fate of her loved mistress may be, she would share it, even to death, were she allowed to do so.

The maid procured by Mr. Lucas for his daughter was one of these. She very soon attached herself to the pink and white skin and the light hair, which black people admire so very much; but Marion Lucas had many more charms than these by which to win affection. She was a gentle, sweet, and very fascinating girl, full of mirth and good nature, and amply justified her maid Yarico's warm appreciation of her.

The approaching wedding was an excuse for Yarico to make the greatest possible fuss about everything concerning her young mistress; nothing could be good enough, no arrangements too grand, and she seemed determined that Miss Marion should look prettier, be more richly dressed, and have things in better taste, than any other bride who had ever been before her.

And, in truth, all who were interested had to be very busy; for it is not as in England, where one

has only to order and find too many hands anxious to carry out one's wishes—eager candidates for employment seeking to be chosen rather than their neighbour. The question in the Tropics among the blacks is, *Who can* do this? and if, after some search, such a clever person is found, the way it might be done, though far below what one liked, would have to be submitted to, or else one must go without it altogether.

An exception to this, however, must be made in favour of plain needlework, for in this the African who has been taught by a French needlewoman excels to a very great extent indeed, and no more beautiful work can be produced than that executed by black fingers.

That part of the bride's trousseau which had to be sent for from England was expected to arrive by the next steamer, but a great deal of plain work fell by Yarico's express wish to her share, and in this she was very particular.

Lady de Montfort's taste was appealed to by all who wished to make presents, and the father of the intended bride could not—or *would* not—make any arrangements without her advice, so that these many consultations rather engrossed her.

Among the many cases was one of rather a strange nature from Marion herself.

One morning, just before luncheon, she entered the room in an excited state, and said, "Dear Lady de Montfort, do tell me what to do. I am so unhappy



about it, and I cannot think at all how I shall manage, or what I could have done to cause it; but my good, kind maid Yarico has run away. She dressed me this morning, but somehow did not seem quite so happy as usual; and when eleven o'clock came she did not bring me the tempting mangoes she is always so very amusing about, so I went to the room where she sits at work, to see what could be the matter, and there I found the pretty dressing-gown she is making for me thrown aside as if by an action of despair, her work-box open, scissors, thread, thimble, &c., all as she had been using them—but Yarico nowhere to be found. I called, and so did Bella the housemaid, and we got Judy and Jock to search for her—but she is nowhere to be found. Where can she have gone? What shall I do?"

"Just be patient, dear, and she will come back again. I am afraid you have hurt her feelings in some way. We have to be very much more careful with these Africans than with our English servants, for they are so much more sensitive, so much more devoted and attached."

"Oh! do you think it could be this? Bella told me the other day she should so very much like to do something for me, so I gave her a few handkerchiefs to hem I had begun myself. Can it possibly be this?"

"Depend upon it, that is it. The Africans are so very jealous. You did not act wisely; you should

have consulted Yarico about it, and then she would have been very pleased to employ her; but, as your maid, she feels she has the charge of your wardrobe, and that you might have asked her if she liked this intrusion on her privileges. She would not mind *who* worked for you; she would like everyone to do so, but not to push her out of her place as your right hand. She would not like anyone to do for you what it is her particular duty to do—no one to supplant her—no one to take away from her what she values so very much—your feeling that no one can do for you so well as she does—your confidence and trust in her. It certainly is stretching it very far to be so hurt at your only giving a little sewing to another to do, but this is their peculiarly jealous nature.

“She fancies that if others attend to your wants as well as herself, you will not value her so much; and it is worth while humouring them a little, for they do not understand the necessity of self-control.

“In your maid Yarico you have a very devoted heart to deal with; be very tender and gentle with it.

“The affection of our fellow-creatures is one of the greatest blessings given to us on earth. It should not be our chief aim to gain this; but when it comes it cannot be too highly cherished, and in whatever shape it falls to our lot, accordingly should it be dealt with and appreciated.

“The love and devotion of a servant should be treated with the greatest consideration, gratitude, and

tenderness, for think how much they sacrifice to serve us—all their time, their own inclinations, their pleasures are given up cheerfully and willingly to do our will—and how much they sometimes have to bear from those who do not think of or value them. We should be guided, too, in our conduct towards them from a higher motive than this; for if by the law of God it is their duty to serve, so also by the law of the same Almighty Parent it is ours to take care of them.

“If the love between us fellow-creatures were only in some small measure like His love Who planted it within our bosoms to be our greatest earthly blessing, how different the world would be! what a holy bond should we not find in the tie of friendship! The forbearance, self-sacrifice, and delight in serving our friend would form our very dearest pleasures; and if each and all practised this love, say where would be our cares, our sins? for is not the root of all sin the want of this holy love? What a holy, tender responsibility would that be of a parent for his child! how intense the effort to bring them up for heaven!

“Instead of this, do we not generally see that it consists more in the pleasure and pride of having a beautiful and clever child, dressing it to the best advantage, and educating it to shine in the world and occupy a good position in it?

“With such a love as Heaven intended ours should be, what would not be the reverence of a child towards a parent—how every thought would be studied, every

want foreseen, and what abundant interest would it not give to supply every comfort and minister the richest pleasures? How every moment of that parent's declining life would be cherished—how the departure dreaded—and how every word that fell from those dear, respected lips would be laid by in holy memory, hallowed by the thought that God, who gives and takes away, will join them yet again, when they themselves shall be more fit to follow. But is this the case with all in the world at present? Do we not find even among the highly-educated sons and daughters, some of them not only thinking of, but acting towards, and speaking to their parents—who, perhaps, have sacrificed much to do their duty—with a kind of insolent indifference, if not of disdain, at their “old-fashioned notions”? with what terms do we not hear the young man occasionally speak of his ‘governor’? with what want of respect and attention does he not often act towards his mother?

“In the holy state and bond of matrimony, too—that type of the union between Christ and His Church—what a very complete oneness would there not be with this holy love; what tender forbearance and self-sacrifice to each other; and how deep would be the feeling of awe about thoroughly fulfilling all the duties attending this *sacred* tie? In the case of the death of one, the knot would still be twisted, though he were in Paradise and she remained on earth.

“For want of this, see what the world is in this respect

—the awful breaking of these vows so common around us, and so connived at by society. Surely next to the sin of murder, must be crying to He for vengeance.

“That vengeance is taken, and will be taken, and sinners therein punished, we cannot for one moment doubt; do we not see it on all sides, and in all shapes every day? Degeneration—disease—ill-health—want of principle and holiness—the world being everything *but* what the love of God would have it be Mammon reigning king over all.

“God died to redeem this world and give His people free-will, in order that they might show their gratitude by offering Him a free-will service of love and obedience; but see how obstinate, stiff-necked man uses bountiful gift—to *serve self!*”

“Oh! thank you for reminding me about all this, and you dear Lady de Montfort, who, in my idea, thoroughly act up to all you say, pray tell me, also about my duties as a wife; it seems to me that I never be a good one, and I am frightened at undertaking it, after having promised to try and do my best.”

“If you really and earnestly purpose it,” answered Lady de Montfort, “you certainly can and will succeed; for grace and strength will be given you; but it must be a real, and a very earnest trying and *persevere* with an ever-abiding sense of the *sacredness* of the union and its duties. You cannot possibly take too high an aim or have too high a feeling about the duty.”

of a wife. The vows once taken, whatever your husband may be to you, this cannot release you from yours. It is the union of souls, and if in any way he sins, it is your place to help him back—by love—never-flinching, never-failing, all-forbearing, all-enduring love.

“Total self-abnegation to God, in the holy state to which you have been called to do His will, is the one only rule for action; and in the strict following of that, will be your stay, your safety, and your happiness.

“If women would act thus, they would influence not only their husbands, but the world. And this it is which is ‘woman’s privilege,’ this it is which is her ‘right;’ it was for this she was created, and for this she will have to answer.

“There is great talk and stir in the world among a certain number of women about their ‘rights and privileges;’ they move completely out of their place, and interfere in things quite above and beyond their sphere.

“Oh! if they would only see and feel in what their true privilege, right, and influence consist, and act up to it, the good they might do in this generation would be incalculable.

“While man with his noble intellect goes forth to do his duty in the world, what is it that chains him to his home; what is it that makes him, when the weary day is over, return with such glad longing to his rest; what gives him spur and interest; what is it which,

next to his religion, helps him to struggle with and overcome the hardships of his toil, but the sweet, calm, honouring affection of his wife?—she in whom he can confide all, every thought, every action, every feeling without a repulse or jar.

“She who is the ever-ready helpmeet, the wise adviser, the cheerer, the comforter.

“She who rules and regulates everything at home according to his wishes ; who is the stay, the example, and the guide to his holiness ; who rears his children in the path he would have them go—the path to Heaven ; and rests not till on leaving them she feels sure they will follow her.

“Can there be a nobler work for women to do than this ?

“Is not this influence, privilege, and right enough ?

“But she has more. The sons and daughters of such a woman rise up and call her blessed. They live lives which do her credit.

“The future warrior and the statesman all owe their greatness to her teaching—when, while yet in their cradles, she stirred up their souls to noble deeds and thoughts, to mastery over themselves, to pride in doing their duty.

“She who would curb down the sobbings of her heart to buckle on her husband’s armour, and bid him go where *duty* called him.

“This it is to be a *wife*. And is it not a lovely picture—can we not see in it *God’s work* ?

"In dire contrast to this, is it to be wondered at that the state of the world should be now so retrograde, when we see the women generally of the present day, so paltry as they are, made up of show and dress, and quite content with being only such—who spend the first of the morning in reading the newspapers, the remainder in dressing and walking about to show themselves; leave their housekeeping to their cooks, their children to the nurses, their husbands to find amusement where they may or can; devote the evenings to parties and flirtations, retire late to rest, and so are late in rising?

"Can we wonder that the man who finds neither companion nor loving cheerer and comforter in his wife, but only one who gives way to temper, wastes his earnings, and desolates his home, should soon weary of such a state, should seek elsewhere for recreation, and that then should soon follow in a whirl all that now forms the chaos of awful sin which so envelops us?

"Woman, it is your *privilege* to alter this. Be what you should be, and the change you will effect will surely be your reward."

Lady de Montfort became quite excited while giving this advice to her young friend, and ran off into these ejaculations from the deep warmth of feeling which the subject had called up in her; but, after pausing for a while, she finished up in this way—

"When at the redemption of the world God chose a



virgin to be His mother, a higher sphere of life created for woman—even that of renouncing earthly ties, and giving herself up entirely to Him—to serve Him in a yet more holy way by ministering to the poor and sick, and by helping His priests in their work of saving souls, or spending their whole life in perpetual adoration and contemplation.

“But all women are not called to this state; simply a great privilege granted only to a chosen few. Many who might crave earnestly for it would fall far short of their duty if, on entering this life, they left any other clearly laid out vocation in doing so. They separated themselves from relations in the world which required not only their care, support, and love, but the comfort of their society.

“One grand object remains for those who are called to matrimony—even that of trying to be what God created woman for first, in the very best possible way.

“There can be no altering the fact that she was made for man. Let her not lose sight of her holy station in this respect, and she will humbly follow her calling and be what she was created for; she will fulfil all duties which belong to it in the way her Maker ordered them to the very best of her power.

“And let her not say either that it is impossible to do this, with all her infirmities, for husbands will be sometimes tyrannical, will try the temper so much, will be so exacting, and will not be as true and devoted as she ought to be.

“The redemption of mankind purchased *all this power for her*. Means of grace and strength were given then, which will enable her to be what she ought to be, if she only uses these means properly and perseveringly, and strives with every effort to regain the lost perfection.

“But she must certainly take a higher aim than that which contents most women now.”

Marion sat listening with great awe and veneration, her head rested on her hand. There was a long pause of thought, and then she rose, and, while a tear rolled down her cheek, she kissed Lady de Montfort's hand.

“You have given me a lesson such as I never had before in my life,” she said. “I hope I may profit by it. I owe you more than I can express, and I think I shall never forget all you have just told me.”

Lady de Montfort was quite right about the maid Yarico. Marion was sitting in her own room after dinner that evening, quietly reading by the twilight near an open window, when, the door being ajar, she thought she heard a sob in the passage. Presently there seemed a shadow fleeting past, and then a few black fingers appeared inside the door. A few minutes later, and a black face peeped round.

Marion raised her head, looked at her, and smiled. Yarico rushed in and threw herself on the ground at her feet.

"Eh! mi missis—me sweet missis—me so sorry you go forgie me."

"What is it I have done to vex you so, dear Yarie? Why did you go away? I have been so unhap about it all day. I had to go without mangoes eleven, and there was no one to dress me for dinner. I searched for you, and made every one else try to find you, but in vain; and we could not think where you had been, or what had become of you. I am very much afraid I have hurt your feelings, and I am sorry for it."

"Wha' fa you gie dem hangki-cha a Bella fou her? You tink me no sabby do am well. Me no like you dat. S'pose Bella want work fou you, me go gie her work. Me no like *he* ax you *heself*; me go gie her plenty work; dame fou do dat, no you. Bella no y maid, da me."

"I won't do so any more, Yarie. I did not know you cared so much about it. She asked me for work, and I thought you had so much to do that I might give her some. You must not be jealous of Bella, for I would not exchange you as my maid for any one; I like you a great deal too much to do that."

"Oh! no, me no jealous. S'pose me tink you like Bella more na me, me go go way aligeder."

"Well, you must not do that, for indeed you would grieve me very much. I should be terribly unhappy and no one can dress me as you do, my good Yarie."

Will you come and put me to rest now? I have had a very long, tiring day, and I am sadly weary."

"Yes, me missis. S'pose you lub me, me no go run 'way no more."

"Well, I do love you; so make yourself quite happy."

The preparations for the wedding progressed very rapidly after this. The next steamer brought out a large box, and when this was opened a goodly array of ball, dinner, and walking dresses, morning costumes, mantles, bonnets, &c., appeared. Mr. Lucas had, indeed, been most bountiful to his daughter, and Yarico was particularly delighted.

The wedding-dress was especially pretty—a white satin of sweeping length, and a beautiful lace veil, large enough to throw over the head and reach down to the knees. The wreath was to be of the natural orange flowers, to be found all around in great abundance.

At Marion's particular request, Ethna was to be one of the bridesmaids, and to choose the style of dress for them all. She decided on white areophane, trimmed with sprays of her favourite flower, the creeping Ipomea, the feathery leaves of which, with the bright little red stars of blossoms, had a very pretty effect on the white. This was the creeper she had growing all over her arbour at Gomier, where the humming-birds came so very often for honey.

The bridescake was a very grand one, beautifully made and iced, as well as decorated with silver orna-

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ments and orange flowers, by a black confectioner, who was an African and taught all this by a very excellent and patient French cook. The epergne was filled with the most lovely white flowers—daturas, jasmines, and tuberoses, arranged with various white creepers, and the very graceful native ferns to be found in the valleys quite wild ; bouquets, also, for the guests of the same.

Lady de Montfort herself arranged these, and also the wreath for Marion's head, which was twined most perfectly by her nimble fingers, of orange flowers and Arabian jasmine.

A small, fresh, opening white moss rosebud, the offspring of Lady de Montfort's tender nurselings from England, was fastened on her bosom by a pearl brooch. Strings of pearls encircled her neck and wrists, and her bouquet was composed of the same flowers as the wreath.

The sweet little Ipomea, which formed so graceful a trimming for the bridesmaids' dresses, also made most becoming wreaths for their heads, and Ethna was very highly complimented for her taste. She herself did it justice, for never did she look more lovely. Her father told her she would be quite a prey for the humming-birds.

A large number of negroes were assembled round the church, ready with baskets of flowers to strew the road as the bride and bridegroom returned.

The breakfast was a very merry one indeed, a large

party having been invited, and every one determined to be happy on the occasion.

The band of the regiment then quartered there played in the court below, cake and sangaree being provided for the musicians.

The negroes from Gomier, and also from Emsall, the estate belonging to Mr. Lucas, were regaled under the tamarind and cocoa-nut trees which graced the grounds round Government House—Yarico taking the head of their table.

When the hour for departure came, Marion took both Lady de Montfort's hands in hers, and after kissing them, bent her head over them with a pause of humble reverence, meaning to express that she would show her gratitude by trying to follow her counsels.

Lady de Montfort kissed her fair young brow in token that she understood her, and sent her away with her blessing.

Did not Lady de Montfort deserve that, should her own children ever become motherless, others might act towards them as she had done ?

## CHAPTER VI.

IN the midst of so much entertainment, however, Ethna's studies were not neglected. Lady de Montfort contrived to give her an hour or two every morning; and in the afternoon, when visitors were being received, she was allowed to be at a little table in the drawing-room to go on with her painting.

At every spare moment mama would be at her side, take up a brush, and show how a little finish here, and a few touches there, might be put in with advantage. Her music and embroidery also made progress.

Lady de Montfort was in this respect also a bright example to many women, especially in the Tropics, where the extreme heat leads them to excuse themselves for doing nothing but use the fan.

Amid the number of public and private duties she never neglected her children. She took a high aim in everything; and so keen was the sense of responsibility she felt in doing her duty to the very best of her power, that no effort was spared in trying to act up to it.

Lady de Montfort's children were held up as examples by other mothers to their own; but, alas! few

had the gift of managing like her ; few could guide, teach, influence, and enforce obedience as she did.

And why ? Only because she gave up her whole heart to doing her *duty*. Every feeling of weariness or inconvenience, any trials or consequences, however great or small, were all put aside and not to be thought of.

This is my duty to God, was her reply to herself ; and however hard it may be to do it—however trying the effort, however great the risk—it must be done somehow or other.

Headache or not, if friends had to be attended to, or entertained, she was doing it, ill or not ; so long as she could sit or stand, she was not wanting in her place.

This day is passing away, she would feel ; it will come to its end in a few hours, and it *will never return* ; it will be stamped on eternity's page, as to whether I have used it ill or well, if I have left anything undone which *might somehow* have been managed, or if I have done or said anything which ought not to have been said or done.

Am I, as the moments fly, making the most of them ?  
Am I doing as many kind deeds as I can possibly *cram* into the time which will never come back ?

Am I losing the smallest opportunity in teaching these little souls entrusted to me, to grow so well that they may be transplanted into the heavenly garden ?

Are all these Africans around me learning day by



day, by my example, to tread carefully the path in which they have been led?

Above all, am I what I ought to be to my husband? Why was I sent out here with him?

The question will be asked me in that day—"Foullest thou fulfilled thy calling?" And oh! that I might be able to kneel in that Holy Presence and hear it said

"Through My merits, and the grace I gave thee, thou hast done it."

These were her constant pervading thoughts—her resource, the spring, of all she said or did, and the sustaining power which upheld her.

Can it be wondered at that she succeeded? Were other women would idle the whole day through, complain of the heat, the dulness, the want of amusement, take a siesta, and rise up to yawn and complain again till dressing-time came for the evening party, she would be at work—at work within herself, and with all, and about all around her—only thinking, "The ever-present God beholdeth me. Am I doing His holy will?"

In the way of recreation, too, she was the chief resource. No parties were so pleasant as those she gave. Those given by others never seemed to go so well if she were not there. Her sparkling lively innocent mirth, her kindness of speech, were always missed.

Did any one look rather awkward or shy, she would soon put them quite at their ease; was any one rather neglected, she at once noticed them; had any one

appearance of some hidden care, she soon managed to get a seat beside her, and in a few moments the ever ready words of solace would flow which the sad one needed ; nor would she leave her till she saw a ray of hope, or a bright beam of consolation playing on her face. Hers were the sweetest and most merry songs, the blithest answers, and the most piquant repartees. She would dance with both old and young ; she would sing and touch her musical instruments as long as any one wished ; and no one ever made a request at all in her power to grant, but it was done *immediately*, with the sweetest smile, the most gracious answer, and with the conviction to every one, that the being able to accede had afforded her the greatest possible pleasure.

In her did every one place confidence, from the highest in station to the lowest. Had any one the possibility of access to her, it was into her ear the plaint was poured, or the joyful tale communicated ; and for all she had the ready, frank, open sympathy, the falling tear or the radiant token of delight.

She helped in every want ; she advised in every strait ; she checked the too eager wish, or urged the too languid resolve.

Young men in army or navy, or civil life, away from home, and, as it were, alone to themselves in the world, all found in her the ready friend. They would go to her with their love story, show her the portrait of the fiancée, and when ill or dying, would

send for her to their bedside, and confide to her the last message—entrust to her care the locks of hair and other treasures to be sent home to mother, sister, and the dear betrothed.

“You’ll write to them yourself about me, won’t you, and break it to them? Tell them how the fever struck me down in two or three days, and that I was not able to write myself; that I was well when I last wrote, and that now I am sending them all I have left—my dying love.”

Then she would answer, “I’ll take it all under my care; be tranquil, happy, rest in peace;” and then she would smooth the pillow, give a cordial, send for the priest or parson, order from her home all the nourishing dainties which are so needful in such cases, and for want of which so many of the friendless ones are left to perish.

Many were such scenes as these; many were the letters of gratitude she received from mothers who had to thank her for having been the means of restoring strength to their cherished sons, or for the sad details—the consolation of knowing that all which could be done had been attended to, and that they had received in their last moments almost the same motherly and sisterly care that would have been lavished on them in their own home. How many were the precious valued treasures sent home to them as relics of the lost one—none of which would they have had, nor known of any of the small particulars,

but for her. The dreadful, crushing fact of death would have been reported, and nothing more.

Will it be thought too great a sacrifice that in doing all this her health and strength were wasting? But was it a sacrifice—was it really wasting her life? No! it was using it properly.

Her reward was clinging round her—the perishing body allowed the soul to grow more strongly. It was maturing and ripening for salvation.

Reader, this is not a phantom raised up by the effort of fervent imagination.

The character from which this etching is drawn has often existed.

And do not imagine it, either, to be coloured, for it is not so. If you consider it impossible to be such, I would ask whether you have ever read any of the lives of the Church's canonised saints. If not, I bid you read some forthwith, and you will see that a state of perfection can be attained in this life, if earnestly, perseveringly, and devoutly sought for.

It must be allowed, however, that it is very much more difficult for one whose calling is to mix with and live in the world.

The distractions, the temptations, the disparagements, the contradictions, the counter influence of worldly intercourse, and the constantly recurring petty trials, perpetually changing with each day; these all jostle and jar against the growth of devotion in the soul, and the energy, strength, and resolve which

spring from the watering grace poured up answer to prayer.

But it is not impossible—it cannot be s He who showed us the way, bid us to be “ and said, “He was sufficient for us.”

Why it seems so difficult, so impossible, is of the want within ourselves: *we are too easily* with our own conduct; we remain contented & arrived at a certain point, and do not care the trouble to get higher.

If we are better than our neighbours; if the friends with whom we mix, we are acknowledged to be amiable, sweet-tempered, industrious, fond and religious; if we fill our stations in life creditably and are doing our duty as far as is expected we comfortably settle ourselves down to rest on this, and soar not on a nobler flight; we think how much *more* we might do if we only tried. How, but for the trouble of turning round to look back and looking in the other side of the wall, we might pass and slip away from us some holy deed of which if done might have placed a pearl-dropper on our diadem—might perhaps have been the means of saving some perishing soul, delivering it from sin and sending it up to glory.

What little bit of self-denial on our part might not have fed the hungry, taken solace to the afflicted, cured the wicked—if we would only *not* be so proud and satisfied with doing so much, and not d

more; but if we would *never be* satisfied and go on doing more and more, for the moments are passing with every hour, and opportunities once lost cannot be regained!

Because the world of Good, we will say, goes round in a fashion, and every one seems satisfied with it such as it is, does it follow that it cannot be improved? must no one try to step out of it? cannot perfection be aimed at by all who hope to go to Heaven? Look and see how very, very far short the multitude come of this.

It is not merely meant, or only, the general run of ordinary people, working hard for their living, and leading respectable and to a certain extent Christian lives, but those who profess much more—the rich and the well-to-do in the world, the highly refined and educated who fill a certain position, and have in a small or large degree some influence.

They will give largely perhaps to public charities, they promote education, they look after the general welfare of their tenantry, the poor of the village near, attend regularly at church, and live lives which to a certain extent set a very good example; but here they stop, and are satisfied with themselves.

The hum-drum of worldly thought and talk goes round and round—amusements of every kind indulged in to a far greater extent, and at a much higher expense, than is necessary for healthful recreation—while at the same time is not very often the sixpence

refused to a beggar in the road? "It is not well encourage these tramps." Alas! perhaps the poor tr has tried in every other way and failed. He may undeserving perhaps, but that is not the business a fellow-sinner.

If we all of us got only what we have deserved!

We forget altogether that in the pleading of the mendicant may be the reminding by Christ of stewardship. We lose sight entirely of what may said to us in the last day: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, My brethren, ye have not done it unto Me."

He who aims at perfection, and feels that the moment may be his last, and this, perhaps, the opportunity he may have, will not refuse the cup cold water.

It is not intended to denounce amusement—in every shape it is desirable, and for recreation necessary—to spend one's life in nothing else must impede arriving at what we ought to be.

The character of Lady de Montfort comes out bright contrast to all this.

There have been many in past ages such, and doubt there are many now—Christ's hidden saints but the reason why they are so few in comparison those who are the reverse, is because we will not try

We are in the world, is the answer, and we must as the world does; we are not called to be saints; must be content to be what we were meant for; i

not necessary for us to trouble ourselves, we can be saved without that. Indeed! and are not all Christians called to be saints? Is this left for the monk and nun alone, who, by retiring from the world, and giving themselves up to a life of devotion and prayer, thus make the arriving at perfection a much more easy work?

Can it not be also for a holy matron who, having fulfilled all the various duties of life well, aiming at perfection all the time, and arriving at the goal in the end, hopes to stand at the foot of the throne and hear it said that, through the all-sufficient grace which was bestowed on her, she has done so?

Read the lives of St. Monica, St. Helen, SS. Elizabeths of Hungary and Portugal, and see how very possible it is. Will not the women of this nineteenth century try to follow them? will they not try to show what women can be, and ought to be? Will they still be content with the frivolous nothingness of their lives, the perpetual round of ridiculous waste of time, while the orphans are *homeless*, the Africans still *heathens*, the beggars *hungry*, and the sick *dying*?

The world goes round, and will come to its end at last. Meanwhile balls, revelries, and amusements of every kind keep pace with it; the many give themselves up entirely to the enjoyment of them, not thinking of the future, not using them as wholesome recreations merely, but the contrary.

Lady de Montfort entered into all of these; *but* because it was her *duty* only.



It was one of her greatest acts of self-denial to do so. Recreation to *her* would have been to have got away from all of it; but this she could not do without being selfish, so she put aside all her own wishes, her tastes, her pleasures, and did what was required of her.

But, while doing so, the work within was not forgotten; in the midst of the greatest gaiety she preserved still the constant recollection of the Almighty's presence, the sense of the ever-watchful Eye.

This helped her to check at once any rising vanity, all self-consciousness or self-gratulation, any selfishness or self-pleasing; kept in constant regularity all courteousness and kindness, restrained the smallest unevenness of temper, and smoothed her brow with humility.

Her heart and soul were thus, even in such scenes, as much engaged in devotion—or nearly so—as if she were kneeling at her Prie-Dieu.

A great sorrow came to Lady de Montfort during this season in town in the loss of her faithful, devoted servant Annette. A severe attack of pleurisy, attended with very high fever, brought on by her bathing in the river when hot, and remaining too long in the water, baffled all skill, and her death was inevitable.

Her kind mistress was not contented with procuring for her the best medical aid and nursing; but, at every spare moment attended to her herself, watching with the sweetest care. When she was obliged by duty to leave her, she put her little daughter in her place.

Ethna liked to sit at the bedside and fan her good

nurse, to wet her forehead with iced Eau de Cologne, bring the medicine, or do anything she was asked ; but what Annette liked best, was to listen to her reading prayers for the sick, or saying her Rosary aloud, in which it was easy to join. The priest was constantly with her too ; she had received the last sacraments, and lay on from day to day expecting her end ; the only little sorrow being the bidding good-bye to her loved mistress and the children she had nursed with such devoted care.

While Lady de Montfort and Ethna alternately bent over her to soothe and cheer, she was always making little speeches of gratitude in her own style about the mercy of God in having brought her away from Africa to live with good, Christian *Buckra* people.

“Ah ! s’pose me bin lef dey na Africa, me no bin sabby di great, good God ; me no bin lub di kind Saviour ; me no bin sabby all ’bout Heaben, and di Bessed Mother wha pray so much for us.”

Then she would kiss her crucifix, while the tears streamed down her face.

For every little kindness shown her she would lift her spare, black hands, and say, “Tanki, me good missis ; tank di great God wha gie me to you.”

When her end seemed very near, both Lady de Montfort and Ethna were sitting beside her. She had clutched the hand of the child she loved so much convulsively, and so kept her near ; while her mistress did not like to leave her for an instant.

After uttering many sentences of love and interest she broke off into a kind of retrospective survey of her life.

"Me bin litti gal, wen me come 'way from my country. Me fader bin want gie me a one big, big man, king na a' we country. Me no bin like um 'ta, so me run 'way na bush, fou hide. One buckra man, wha bin come na one big ship, find me dey, he ax me come na di big ship, he go tak me na one odder country. Me go see dey plenty buckra, dey go lub me an' gie me pretty ting. Me bin glad, me say yes me go go wi um; so me go. He bin hab plenty litti gal, big men, plenty women, plenty litti boy na di 'big ship. He gie a' we plenty nice ting fou eat; he mak a' we laugh, we sing, we like um plenty. Den a' we come na dis country one good French massa buy me, he tak me gie di good missis; she bin gie me nice dress, pretty hang-ki-cha fou tie me head, 'ansom bead; me bin so glad, me sing a' day. Den she teach me 'bout God na heaben, she tak me na di church, dey pour water 'pon me head, dey mak me Christian, call me Annette. Me fader bin call me 'Too-coo'—me like Annette best. Ah! den di good missis mak me mine he picnies. Me bin mind a' di picininies ti he go way na France. Den you good massa buy me, den you litti picnie come (and here she raised Ethna's hand to her lips), di pretty litti picnie wi di merry mouth. Ah! me good missis, you bin mak me so happy, you bin so kind, me lub you so much. Yo

teach me plenty; you read a' di good book fou me; you mak me good—me go pray fou you. Oh, me so glad me bin come na dis country."

All this time her crucifix was by her side, and with every word of gratitude she kissed it. She had told all this long story very falteringly, with a pause every now and then, and she hung her head now as if inclined to sleep.

"Rest a little now, my good Annette," said Lady de Montfort, putting some Eau de Cologne on her brow, "and Ethna shall fan you while you sleep. I am just going to see how the children are and if I am wanted."

When she came back Ethna was fanning still, but kneeling; something in Annette's face had alarmed her, and she involuntarily had dropped on her knees to beg for mercy on her poor soul. Her mother at once saw the departure was at hand. She turned out of the door, called to her page, and sent him for the priest.

The priest was at home, and came directly. The Holy Viaticum was given her; and Annette's looks of gratitude to him and her beloved mistress showed how fully she appreciated this greatest of blessings.

She had been a devout communicant for some years, and always in the habit of going into retreat for a week previous to the day of her communicating, in order to make a careful preparation and confession. She had always, too, kept up a practice from her confirmation of dressing in white for the day as a mark of reverence.

A white muslin kerchief of large size formed the head-dress, tied up quite high, something in the style of the French peasantry in Normandy. A similar one was plaited in folds round her neck, the ends of which were fastened at the waist, both behind and in front, over a very daintily got-up chemise made of French cambric. The skirt of white demity, made very full, and drawn round the waist by a tape just as one draws close up a bag, being also very long in train behind and stiffly starched, formed a flowing dress of very imposing effect. This dress was never worn but on her days of Holy Communion.

Her rule of rising at midnight for prayer, and again at break of day, has already been noticed. And one can believe that, together with the conscientious life she led with regard to her duties, she was well prepared for death.

It seemed so indeed. After receiving the Holy Viaticum she lay quite quiet, as if it would have been almost wrong to speak again in this world. She was perfectly sensible, held her crucifix tight, and seemed just calmly waiting.

The good priest would not leave her, nor did Lady de Montfort.

Neither did Ethna. Child as she was, she had been too well trained to have any fear in looking at death. She only felt that her dearly loved nurse was going away to be at rest, where she had been all her life from her baptism preparing to go, and longing for the

transit. She knew that on the soul leaving the body there would be perhaps suffering to that body, painful to witness from the struggles with the enemy; but she felt that the good nurse who had taken such care of her, would like her to be near to the last. She noticed the look wishing her to stay; and, however distressing it might be, Ethna, young as she was, felt brave enough to bear it for duty's sake.

Such is the effect of good example on a mother's part. Lady de Montfort saw all this expressed in her face, and was pleased for her to be there.

They waited, and joined the priest every now and then in prayers for the departing soul. Annette gradually sunk, and became more and more weak. A loving look to her dear mistress and her child whenever she opened her eyes, convinced them of her being herself to the last. She had at first answered distinctly Amen to all the prayers, but as the end approached she was unable for this, and only expressed her sense of hearing by raising her eyes as if looking to heaven.

After a quiet pause, when they feared she was gone, and listened for her breath, scarcely perceiving it, she suddenly gave a slight gasp, then a very calm smile stole over her countenance, and at once they perceived unmistakably that she had passed away.

After the priest left, Lady de Montfort took Ethna who was now in convulsive sobs, away to her room saw her put to bed, and gave her a cordial.

She then returned, overlooked all the necessary rangements, saw her properly and reverently shrouded, crossed her hands on her breast and put her crucifix within them.

She placed lighted candles at her side and flow about her, ordered the room conveniently, and put her water near her.

Sir Romuald himself undertook all the arrangements about the funeral, which was to be in every particular such as would show their great respect for their faithful servant.

When the day arrived the priest came, attended the crucifix bearer and two acolytes, to meet the corpse as it was borne from the house, and walked its head to the church. The bearers were six black men dressed in white; and black women dressed white walked as bearers outside the men who bore the coffin, and carried bouquets of white flowers in their hands.

Sir Romuald and Lady de Montfort went as co-mourners, and a large throng of Africans followed.

Thus was this holy African laid to her rest.

And, reader, this is a true etching, drawn from life, exactly as this life was led.

I would offer it for the consideration of the English public.

It is the life and death of an African *slave*, who for that slavery, as her own words expressed it, we never have been a Christian.

You have seen, too, what a devout, holy, conscientious Christian she was.

I wish very humbly, but at the same time very solemnly, to make a few remarks upon this.

It seems to be the sometimes taught, and at any rate growing opinion among Protestants generally, that our Blessed Lord died to save all mankind, *without conditions*, whether baptized or no—heathen, savage, barbarian, Hottentot, Chinese, Jew, Mahometan, and infidel. They say that all these will go to heaven when they die. And indeed some people go so far as to say that the very wicked, those who have lived notoriously bad lives, in open and blasphemous defiance of God's laws, and died totally unrepentant, will all be saved after a time, and that there is no such thing as everlasting punishment.

Also that the annihilation of life is quite impossible with Him who created it.

Living and acting on this theory, so totally contrary to all our Blessed Lord taught (though those who uphold it profess to live by the Bible), they consequently deduce from it that though it may be, and is no doubt a very good, praiseworthy work, in those who have a *taste for it*, to try to convert and make Christians of their brethren, yet that it is not *absolutely necessary*, for that they will be saved without it, and that therefore no one *need* to trouble themselves much about any such thing.

This is like many other of their theories, very com-



fortable. One can lay one's self up and go to sleep upon it in a very satisfactory way.

But it is an essential point to ask of those who think thus, What should we be if St. Gregory the Great and St. Augustine had thought and acted thus towards us? and how they can reconcile with it such texts as these, the words of our Blessed Lord :

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" ?

"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have *no life* in you" ?

Or when He speaks in the same way of those who shall be condemned to everlasting punishment—

"Where the worm dieth *not*, and the fire is not quenched" ?

On pondering well over all this, it will be seen how essentially necessary it is for us to think more of the *conditions* of our salvation than we do, for these are all expressly laid down for us.

It would be far wiser and more profitable for us if we did this rather than in working out a theory of our own on the subject, and acting up to that *instead*.

It must not be forgotten either, that those very people who uphold this theory have been taught, and profess to believe, that there are *two* sacraments **ESSENTIALLY** necessary to salvation, and yet they act entirely, both for themselves and their neighbours, as if these sacraments were *not* necessary, and our Blessed Lord's words without purpose or real meaning.

One feels irreverent in even writing this ; yet if men will not only neglect themselves, but take no trouble as to whether their neighbour be made Christian or not, does it not seem as if they deny what they are taught, and profess what they do not believe ? for the upholding such a theory as this maintains that men can be saved without being Christians, or without the aid of the sacraments, which is absolutely and in fact denying our Blessed Lord's words, as well as the teaching of the Church.

One who has lived for many years among the Africans, and knows them well, may be pardoned for making these observations. She would beg the English to think more deeply of their high privileges—the English who were once barbarous and savage people themselves, and for whom so much has been done ; so much precious blood of martyrs spilled in order to make them Christians.

Will they still be satisfied to go on growing in refinement and luxury of every kind, wrapping themselves round in their wealth and enjoyments, and be content to allow so many of their brethren to perish everlastingly for want of aid ?

For if the sacraments and a true faith are *necessary* to salvation, clearly those who are *not* partakers of the sacraments, and who have *no* faith, cannot be saved.

“ Believe and be baptized ” is the command, and the *reward*, the *consequence*, is *salvation*.

This command would not have been given if it had not been necessary.

Another observation, too, obtrudes itself from the description of this holy African's life and death.

She is simply a single specimen of the effect which the teaching of the true faith, that is, the Holy Catholic apostolic Roman faith, has upon all of them more or less.

It is most assuring to the believer to notice this, while they at the same time perceive how utterly all the heresies fail with them.

The religion as established by law in England never does, and never will succeed. They cannot understand it at all; it is only a perpetual jumble of contradictions in their minds, and no kind of holiness is ever established in them by it.

Annette, as well as all the other Africans of this island, forming a large population, had been taught by French priests and French settlers; they were all of them more or less holy, easily governed, and a most orderly, simple people.

When the island was taken by the English from the French, in the war terminated by the battle of Waterloo, Protestant pastors of all denominations were sent out; a Protestant church built, with bare whitewashed walls, without altar, without the tabernacle, without the crucifix, but a very large pulpit, a nearly as large

reading-desk and clerk's seat in the centre of the building, at which the poor negroes wondered. They could not succeed in taking them from the faith; but it naturally caused confusion, particularly when they saw the "buckras" for whom they had conceived such veneration, in the persons of their own priests and masters and mistresses, worshipping in a different manner.

How does the God of mercy and love look down upon this?—He who is in every place, and sees into the innermost soul of every believer.

Must it not be with grief that the love which He has taken such pains to teach, and of which He sets such example every day, should be found so difficult to learn and practice; that mammon, who presides by selfishness, should have such power still?

## CHAPTER VII.

AN interesting event occurred a few days after, which was a visit from General Bertrand and his son, accompanied by a number of French officers. They were cruising about among these islands, and had just come from Martinique.

One can imagine how the man who had fought under Wellington, and was now halt and lame from the shot received at Waterloo, hailed with pleasure as his visitor one of Buonaparte's principal generals.

The vessel in which he arrived, as is usual on entering an English port, fired a salute of twenty-one guns, which was immediately returned from the fort near the town.

This salute was always a signal to the inmates of Government House that they must expect visitors; but they little thought who was coming this morning.

As is the custom, they immediately on landing, before repairing to an hotel, paid their visit of respect to the Governor. He had in preparation put on his full uniform, and leaning on his sword for support—the

lame leg making it an uneasy posture to stand quite erect—he awaited the arrival of the expected guests.

When the aide-de-camp, who had stood at the door and received the cards, handed them to Sir Romuald, he gave a start of astonished surprise, moved rapidly forward to meet the renowned General ere he had scarcely crossed the threshold on following his announcement, and grasped him most cordially by the hand.

“This is indeed a pleasure I had little expected,” he said. “Welcome, most welcome to our island home. You must take up your abode with us while you remain in it—I cannot hear of your going anywhere else.”

General Bertrand thanked him with equal warmth and pleasure, and presented his son, for whose health they had made this trip across the Atlantic.

The usual courtesies and exchange of compliments being ended, a more pressing invitation was renewed both for themselves and as many others as could be accommodated.

Sir Romuald then led the General and his son to his wife’s boudoir, leaving the officers to be entertained by his aide-de-camp.

Lady de Montfort, both surprised and extremely interested, evinced sincere pleasure in the meeting, and expressed herself so sweetly and cordially on the subject that General Bertrand was warmly charmed.

They sat and conversed on various topics without any flag till luncheon-time.

Ethna was in the room with her mother when the great man entered.

She was simply noticed at first in the way all little girls are; but as she stood beside her mother, leaning on the back of her chair, intently gazing on the very beautiful bald head, fringed with white hair, of the General; and gathering greater confidence from the mild, sweet smile of his beaming blue eyes, he seemed to become deeply interested in her.

Evidently, however, understanding that to speak to a thus timid child would be to frighten and upset her at once, he contented himself with just a passing glance now and then, as if to draw her gradually into more and more friendliness; and Ethna became so intently pleased that she appeared to be devouring all the old man said. Her face brightened up with animation, and all timidity seemed to disappear.

When General Bertrand rose to offer his arm to Lady de Montfort on the luncheon bell ringing, he put his hand gently on her head, giving it a little pat and smooth of the hair, and said—

“I hope we shall be quite good friends, my dear little girl, before I go away.”

Ethna blushed and felt very proud, but somewhat uneasy about going with them to take her dinner.

Papa took her hand, and placed her beside him, quietly helping her. She did contrive to eat, but it

was a very poor dinner indeed—so much was she taken up with thinking about the General who had been in the same battle when her papa was wounded, and on the enemy's side too; that he should be actually lunching with them! and, besides, that he was such a very delightful, amusing, kind old man.

She felt quite astonished at herself for not being frightened at Buonaparte's friend, and a soldier too—for officers did generally alarm her a little, though her papa was one; and she concluded, as she watched him very gently talking to Lady de Montfort, and attending to all her little wants with that refinement of polish French gentlemen so excel in, that it was because he was so very kind.

After luncheon was over the next thing to be thought of was amusing their guests, and a ride up the mountains seemed to be the most desirable thing.

As horses were always ready in the Government House stables, they were all soon in their saddles and started off.

A most beautiful day favouring them, they had the prospect of a delightful afternoon, scrambling up the hills and among the valleys, crossing rivers, and stopping at sugar estates for a little rest.

They were only to return home for an eight o'clock dinner; therefore, as soon as they were gone, Lady de Montfort wrote cards of invitation to as many as she could receive that day from among those who would expect to be asked to meet the newly-arrived guests,



begging some others, and particularly ladies, to come in for the evening, when there would be music, and perhaps dancing. She also wrote larger invitations for the next day, knowing that Sir Romuald would like to be as hospitable as possible, and that he would be grieved if any one were neglected.

She then tried over a few French songs, and made many little arrangements to gratify and do especial honour to her company.

She always attended to these minute details to give as much pleasure as possible, and even in her toilet this was not forgotten. If Scotch people were to be entertained, she dressed in plaid and heather, and introduced furze and thistle in her decorations; if the party were English, she appeared in roses; and now that she was doing honour to the Buonapartists, violets adorned her hair, and looped up the lace flounces of her dress.

When the party returned, which they did only just in time to dress, they were loaded with flowers, specimens of rock, sulphur, and many other natural curiosities they had found in their rambles; roots of native ferns, &c.; their hats, pockets, and hands as full as possible; and they were delighted at the beautiful romantic scenery.

As might be expected, a most enjoyable evening followed.

Uncou Henry, the butler, had taken especial pains about everything, and, black African as he was, no

English butler could have done better. Not a particle of silver that could be used was allowed to remain idle. He seemed determined that the officer who had fought against his master should go away very deeply impressed with his entertainment. Never was he known to have exerted himself more than on the present occasion. He was most indefatigable with the champagne, and especially attentive to the bald-headed old General. He would every now and then bend his head down for a facetious whisper into his master's ear about something he thought of, trying also constantly to catch his mistress's eye, so as to discern by a look from her if the dishes were arranged and all else done to her taste. Then he would fancy some special dainty might tempt the company further—change the plates, and hand either the favourite preparation of land-crabs, or the fanciful dish of fricaseed crapaud, some stewed turtle, or fried tree-trees.

“Tak some dis, massa, he berry good; you go like um,” bending down his head in a confidential whisper to one or other of the guests whenever talking was going on elsewhere, and the person he addressed happened to be for a moment silent. He never seemed satisfied until he thought every one had eaten as much as they possibly could; and he would beckon to this footman, nod to the other, make the most extraordinary grimaces, and be quite in a state of excitement, feeling certain that the whole of the pleasure of the entertainment depended entirely on him.

The finishing stroke to all was the arrangement of the dessert, in which he took especial delight; for the native fruits are so particularly beautiful, they always prove great attraction to strangers, and win much admiration.

Uncou Henry had the most clever way of preparing a shaddock. The top of the thick rind was first cut off, and this he notched all round in thorough African style. Then he cut down the thick rind in equal divisions to very nearly the other end of the fruit, and tearing it away from the pulpy juicy part, placed it to stand thus in the dish, the pulpy part being a large round ball surrounded by a sort of palisade of rind. Then he stuck two silver forks into the centre of the pulpy fruit, just tearing it a little apart ready for helping, and the round piece of rind which he had notched so tastefully he stuck on the top of the whole like a crown.

This was to place before "his massa."

A more inviting still, and prettier dish, was got ready with more trouble for his "missis." This was a splendid pine-apple, the rind carefully peeled off with great care not to hurt the handsome leafy top. After the rind was taken off by cutting it round so carefully that he had it in an entire whole, except a slit on one side where he inserted the knife, it was put aside till he had also cut the pine-apple ready for helping round and round, so as not to have any of the core of the centre in any piece. When all cut up in this way, it

was packed together to look as if it had not been touched, having the rind placed round it quite in appearance as it grew. Then with the greatest pride (having got this ready previously) did he place his clever piece of workmanship before his "missis," with the firm belief that no one would suppose it had been touched.

He was generally right, for no perfect stranger ever would; and the gentleman next to Lady de Montfort, on offering to help it for her, would be astonished to find it all ready cut for him.

Sometimes on taking hold of the leafy top to slice it as is generally done in England, he would be quite in dismay to find it come out in his hands with the whole of the core attached to it.

This would always cause a grin of conceited pleasure on Henry's face, and if he got applause for it, no actor on the stage could make a more graceful and amusing bow of acknowledgment. It was certainly better in gracious grotesqueness than any that even the famous Grimaldi ever made.

He was wonderfully proud of his livery, and as he knew that he must wear shoes and stockings when he had it on, he very bravely bore all the disagreeable of this discomfiture on its account, and shuffled about as if with the intention of showing that his feet were clad; for although the wearing of these is to the negro a piece of torture, so convinced are they that they cannot be well dressed without them, that they willingly

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submit while the occasion for dress lasts. Directly it is over, with the sense of greatest relief they tear the shoes and stockings away, and put them gladly aside till the next important call for them arrives.

But after this uncouth digression about Uncou Henry's livery, the rest of the dessert must be described.

Mangoes, oranges, bell apples, cashews, sapadillas, sugar apples, cashimas, figs, pomegranates, granadelas, pommeroses, red bananas, grapes, melons, cherries, plums, sour-sop, prickly pears, or the fruit of the cactus, and the very small shaddock, called forbidden fruit, all appeared in so many dishes, decorated with flowers ; and besides these, endless little corner plates of Guava jelly and candied fruits, not forgetting the renowned West India preserved ginger, limes, and citrons.

The silver epergne was a magnificent piece of plate, which had been presented to Sir Romuald by the inhabitants of the island as a grateful tribute of esteem, and was in the form of a cocoa-nut tree, under which negroes were reclining in happy, lazy attitudes peculiar to themselves. The vase for flowers was a basket gracefully placed at the top among the branches ; it was filled on this occasion with some magnificent African lilies and brilliant deep-red blossoms of the *tous les mois*, contrasted by a few gracefully drooping clusters of the never-to-be-forgotten, if once seen, shell flower.

Trusting that this description of the table is clear

enough to be imagined, it must be allowed that it presented no mean appearance.

Uncou Henry, after he had readjusted this dish, turned the other a little more round, and placed something else in the corner to correspond, seemed very well pleased on the whole at the result, particularly after placing the decanters, all dressed in white cambric petticoats with trimmings, and quite wet from having been soaked in the ice water of the wine-cooler, in their silver castors.

The water in the finger-basins was not only scented with perfume, but each had in it, floating on the water, some sweet leaf and pretty blossom.

The band of the regiment quartered on the island played during dinner in the grounds, just near enough for the music to be thoroughly enjoyed, but not too loud.

The ball for the next day was arranged to be a very grand one, and everything done to make it imposing as well as pleasant. Invitations extended to every one having the smallest claim to be remembered. The mountains were explored for flowers to decorate the rooms, and as many as could be managed thrown open. The blossoms of the sugar-cane, and the cane arrow, which are graceful feathers of about a yard in length and a foot in depth; also cocoa-nut blossoms were obtained in abundance.

The branches of the cocoa-nut tree tacked against

the walls, or tied about the passages, the leaves being interlaced, formed a pretty, effective background for the flowers, and also a very able support in decorating with them.

Innumerable lamps of all shapes and sizes and colours, suspended and fastened wherever they could be placed, gave a most brilliant light; and the windows and doors all wide open of a house spreading over much ground, with many rooms, but only one storey high, it was quite possible to imagine one's self dancing in a fairy's grotto rather than in a tenement of mortal man; the bright moon and stars, too, penetrating through the rooms, and not shut out in any way from the dancers, added to this.

The officers who manned the sloop of war in which our visitors were going on their tour through the islands were invited to this ball, and were, as sailors always are on such occasions, among the greatest lions of the night.

The way in which ladies go to balls in the West Indies is quite startling to Europeans, that is, in those islands where the roads will not admit of carriages, as was the case in the one wherein these scenes are laid.

They must either walk, be the distance ever so great, or go on horseback, for the hammock would quite spoil the dresses. These are always necessarily of the very lightest material, and therefore do not well bear any kind of crushing.

The plan therefore usually adopted is to have the pony (generally a creole), led up to a "leaping-on-stone," and then lifting up the gauze dress, seat one's self on the saddle, placing the dress over on both sides, so as not to get crumpled.

A large lace veil or mantilla is thrown over the head to prevent the breeze from disarranging the hair, &c., and in this way the ladies trot along to the ball, escorted by the gentlemen, sometimes on foot, but often mounted, too. As there is no lighting by gas, should the moon not shine, a negro walks in front with a torch.

On this evening, as so many were expected, the roads all round in every direction, as well as the streets of the town leading to Government House, were quite alive and bright from the very numerous parties proceeding thither.

Owing to the regimental bands not being allowed the fatigue of being the musicians all through the night, the music, too, is somewhat strange, and not often pleasant for dancing, as the only other musicians to be obtained are negroes who play from ear, and are not very particular as to time.

The orchestra on these occasions consists of four black men, generally; two play violins, one a flute, and the other a tambourine.

The first violin leads in such tunes of quadrilles, lancers, country-dances, waltzes, &c., as he may have learnt from any one who has taken the trouble to teach him, by playing them on the piano till he has caught



the air; the second violin and flute follow; and the tambourine contrives to make a noise by being beaten, flourished and jingled, the man getting so much excited that the instrument is passed now between his legs, tossed high up in the air over his head; while he himself jumps and turns, and kicks about, as if he were a tumbler engaged for the amusement of the party—and in which he succeeds to his heart's content.

Notwithstanding this grotesque style of music, however, the dancers always contrive to enjoy themselves most thoroughly, and on this particular eventful evening, it was very evident. The dancing was kept up till four o'clock in the morning without intermission.

In vain did poor Lady de Montfort look tired and feel so, the other ladies of the party were not to be influenced, but stayed on as long as the sailors wanted fresh partners; and so thoroughly did these French, dance-loving sailors enjoy it, that tired and worn out as she was, poor Lady de Montfort felt rewarded for the fatigue she had undergone.

The negroes had taken advantage of their privilege to "come and see" the newly-arrived French "buckras," and one calling another, nearly all the black population of the town were collected round Government House.

They made their remarks, as usual, one to another, and excited no small merriment among the strangers, which is always the case at this novel scene.

"Ah da one ansome man, dis I ya no dance good!"

But if one of the party jumped and sprang with more seeming enjoyment than the others they would clap their hands and exclaim with delight, "Ah da he wha dance good!"

No one ever thought of restraining these innocent creatures. They would block up the doorway, climb the windows and sit on the sill, have a joke ready for any "buckra" who came near them, but never do anything wrong.

Silver and supper were as safe as if with closed doors and an armed staff of police. No such thing as policemen were ever required, at least not among these Catholic negroes of whom the writer speaks.

If by chance they were ever tempted to fall into this sin, and were treated kindly, they never rested till they had confessed the deed to the person from whom the article had been stolen, and restored it.

They stayed on this evening enjoying the ball in their way till the party broke up and retired to rest, as is always the case; and the negroes who looked on at the "buckras'" ball always enjoyed it, and looked back on the scene with as happy a recollection as any of the invited guests did; indeed, so complete is their pleasure in it as a "spectacle," that if they hear of any ball or party of any kind to be given, it is communicated one to another with the greatest zest, and it is immediately decided—"Oh! a' we go see,"—and looked forward to with as much, and perhaps more, pleasure than by any of those who take part in it. They are so totally

devoid of all care, and enjoy everything so much more simply and really than we do.

A gentleman who possessed an estate on the mountains, on which was one of the boiling springs from which we get our sulphur, had just built a new set of sugar works, and he had made a request to Lady de Montfort that she would put the first cane into the mill. The getting up a pic-nic for this event was only waiting her decision and fixing the day.

She rightly guessed that nothing would amuse her guests more than such an excursion, so the party was arranged; and they were to visit the boiling spring also.

The only way of getting up and down the mountains is by riding the creole pony. Other horses are used constantly, but they are not so safe or so pleasant in their pace up and down the hill and narrow passes.

Also one *may* go in a hammock, but this is not much liked, as it has such an invalid appearance, and they are seldom used but in cases of illness.

The hammock is slung on a large bamboo, numbers of which are found growing wild to the size of four or five inches in diameter and four or five yards in length, with a graceful and feathery tuft of leaves at the end. The bamboo is generally cut long enough to allow of the hammock hanging between two men, who walk one before the other. Having whiped up a towel they place it on their head, and then rest the end of the bamboo on this. The hammock hangs on it be-

tween them, and they trot along, keeping, step in time to songs they sing as they go, very often making rude verses about something going on at the time, responding to each other about it, and having a good laugh between themselves, with the greatest possible respect, however, towards the person in the hammock, whether man, woman, or child.

The party on this day, as usual, preferred the saddle, and when ladies go on these excursions they never wear the riding habit, but, dressed as they are usually for a pic-nic in England, prepare themselves for the ride by tying a long nankeen or other kind of light skirt round their waist over everything else, and this, on alighting, is easily taken off.

They started, a very merry party—all the officers of the staff and the sailors with them.

Uncou Henry took great care to provide several baskets well stocked with everything necessary for a sumptuous pic-nic lunch, and plenty of champagne, not forgetting to put in a supply of eggs that they might amuse themselves by boiling them in the spring, which is easily done, and rather astonishes strangers.

On arriving at the estate they all alighted, and the horses were put up for several hours. The first thing to attend to was the the business of the day, namely, setting the new mill going, which was turned by a beautiful little mountain stream from one of the large rivers, looking as if made by man for the purpose, though it was really nature's work.

The men and women who attended to it and fed the mill were on this day dressed in holiday suits, for it was not intended to labour, but only to see how well the mill would work.

The negroes were all to have a grand supper on the savanna and then a tum-tum dance. Their master was to attend to it after the governor, his friends, and suite had departed.

The wife of the head boiler was deputed to hand the cane to Lady de Montfort. She was a very fine, handsome negress, dressed in a most costly style—with sweeping, bright chintz dress; a most dashing turban, stuck all over with brooches and pins of various colours in glass to imitate real jewels, adorned her head; gold beads and other necklaces completely covered her throat and bosom; very massive, large, gold pendants hung from her ears; and on every finger were several rings; while her dainty cambric chemise, the sleeves of which reached to the elbow, were fastened there by large gold studs.

It is rather a dangerous thing to feed the mill which squeezes the juice from the sugar cane, as the plan of its construction is to have two large rollers quite close to each other turned by a water-wheel. The canes are just held in between the rollers for a minute, and their turning round draws the cane in altogether, and squeezes it so as to extract all the juice and leave the cane quite dry and crushed to pieces, fit for nothing but fuel. If not very careful, the hand gets drawn in too, and

sometimes accidents occur in this way ; therefore an expert feeder is necessary as well as a practised one.

It was merely the ceremony Lady de Montfort had to go through ; and taking the cane in her hand from the negress—who presented it with a very low curtesy—the feeder came up and guided it to the mill. Directly the rollers took it in, claps and shouts came from all the company, and the negroes were most highly excited.

The pic-nic lunch, carried there in baskets on the negroes' heads, was prepared on the grass under some beautiful banana, shaddock, and breadfruit trees growing in great abundance on the banks of the river ; but, before sitting down to it, Sir Romuald de Montfort asked leave of their host to take his friends to see the boiling spring.

It was in great vigour on this day—hissed, smoked, and bubbled up as high as nearly a foot from the surface of the ground ; while the froth, or steam, from it fell all around for some yards, forming a substance, as it cooled, of a light-yellow colour.

This is the sulphur which, after a while, becomes cold and crystallised into the state in which it is sent home to England for use—the spring not being always boiling allows of this. It is taken up in rock-like pieces, and the most beautiful specimens are sometimes found—of curious form, deep-bright straw-colour, and very sparkling. When the spring boils there is always a very unpleasant scent in the air.

One can get up close to the boiling crater—as it looks

like—by placing planks over the lava—which it really is—and walking on the plank.

If, by any chance, the foot slips into this lava it would get scalded and very much hurt. As our party had a very wide plank placed for them, however, they did not mind trying; and the sailors particularly enjoyed tying an egg in the corner of a handkerchief, and holding it in to boil. This gets done beautifully in the time usually allowed for boiling eggs on the fire—the regular three minutes.

After being much amused in this way, they returned to the rendezvous for luncheon, and very far surpassing any of our English pic-nics in point of scenery, delicious air, and romantic circumstances, it was a day never to be forgotten by the strangers.

They were intensely delighted with the variety and beauty of the ferns as well as flowers. Down in the valley, close to where they were lunching, were to be seen ferns as large as small trees; and one species branching off at the top from one frond like a trunk, had somewhat the appearance of a young palm.

This large frond is really a trunk of its kind, and is used there for making posts to cattle pens and things of that sort; it is very strong and tough, and does not decay quickly; it is about six inches in diameter and four or five, even six feet, in height.

After much roaming about and collecting curiosities both in vegetative and animal life, they became anxious to return home, as the roads down the moun-

tains were steep, narrow, and, at some of the turning places, very dangerous.

Skirts were put on, horses brought out, and all started afresh, leaving their negro friends to enjoy their evening dance among themselves.

The following day had been fixed for the departure of the visitors; accordingly all arrangements were made for proceeding on their voyage. Numerous panniers of fruit and vegetables were stored in; and the water in this island being considered as very superior to that in the others, so beautifully clear, sparkling, and free from all chalky or other deteriorations, a number of casks were filled as a supply for some time, so as to avoid having to get water elsewhere.

When all this was completed, the kind-hearted, old General Bertrand, who had contrived to make himself much liked during his visit, with very great regret took his leave.

He presented Lady de Montfort and also her little daughter with a very beautiful bracelet, saying to the latter, "It is much too large for your little arm now, my child; but by and by, when you are a woman, you will wear it, I hope, for my sake; and it will remind you of one who, I know, rather frightened you when he first came, but with whom you became very good friends before he went away. If you ever come to France while I am alive, be sure you set those you are with to find me out, and let me have the great pleasure of renewing our acquaintance."



He expressed the same to Sir Romuald and Lady de Montfort in the most cordial and affectionate terms, assuring them of the delight it had been to him to visit them, and that he should ever retain a most lively sense of the warmth and hospitality with which he had been entertained, adding, that the friendship which he hoped now existed between them would be by him among his most valued.

Sir Romuald de Montfort and his aide-de-camp attended them to the beach and saw them embark. A salute was fired from the fort as they rowed on board.

Then a salute was returned from the sloop of war, and thus bidding a final "adieu," the pretty little vessel sailed away.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ETHNA had now completed her twelfth year. Her birthday had been celebrated in the quiet loving way so peculiar to her mother's nature; it was entirely devoted to her child.

The early morning saw them both at Mass.

When they met at breakfast, her little brothers had each been provided with a present for her. Her father's gift was an elegant writing-desk, and her mother's a paint-box.

Her father had taken her in his arms, and while he gave thanks for such a blessing conferred on him by her birth, had prayed that the Almighty Protection, which alone could keep her such, might, with continued mercy, be still granted her.

The greater part of the day had been spent with her mother *alone* in quiet talk and reading, of such a nature, too, as she never forgot, for Ethna was now stepping out of the child and entering on her "teens," that epoch which, especially in a girl's life, is full of interesting events.

A very pretty little children's fête had been got up

in the grounds surrounding Government House, and a number of negro boys and girls entertained with interesting games. The grounds were peculiarly well adapted for this, from abounding with noble trees which afforded the most grateful and refreshing shade, a luxury never too highly appreciated in the tropics.

A natural grotto formed of large rocks and ferns under these trees was taken advantage of for the picnic tea, and Ethna, crowned with roses, waited on the party, making all the little black faces quite happy with cake and sweetmeats.

They ran about, danced, and enjoyed game after game, till the dew of the evening falling, as it does sometimes during part of the year very soon after sunset, warned them it was dangerous to remain out of doors much longer.

On retiring to rest, it was not the enjoyment of the evening which occupied Ethna's thoughts, but the solemn words of her mother through the day. She thought of how, that on entering another year—her thirteenth year!—it was necessary to begin afresh and work still harder within herself to conquer all her besetting faults.

The talk with her mother had made her look back on the scenes of the past year, and she remembered how many times she had lost the power of self-restraint and given way to the impulse of the moment; how her over-sensitiveness had made others suffer, even her own dear mother! The tears rolled down her cheeks, she

shrouded her head in her hands and buried them in her pillow. Oh! how often had she repented of these faults—over and over again—and still they were not cured, still they remained strong and vigorous as ever.

Pride had been sown in that baby heart, and it was so difficult to eradicate it! Often she fancied she had torn it out and cast it away altogether, but the roots sprung up afresh, grew, flourished, and blossomed, and she feared it would never be got rid of; she sobbed till she fell asleep, slept the calm deep sleep of childhood, and rose with fresh energy and vigour, determined to try harder, resolved to conquer, anyhow.

And so the birthday had passed, and she was now beginning to feel her way in the early dawn of the new year she was entering on.

A month had passed, when the priest, who had taken such pains with her from her almost infancy, called on Lady de Montfort to say that he had received from their Bishop an announcement of his intention of going through the islands for the purpose of confirming any Catholics who might be ready for that sacrament; urging him to collect as many as he could. He added that he particularly wished Ethna to be confirmed.

“She is very young, I allow, but age in years is really not a matter of consequence. She is thoughtful, and very anxious to improve and correct her faults; and I am most desirous that she may have all those means of grace afforded her which can alone enable her to succeed. However timid and uncertain we may be about the

wisdom of *some* things, we *ought never to lose opportunities*,—for if once lost they may not be regained ; indeed, more—an opportunity once lost may be lost for ever.”

“Thank you from my heart, dear father,” said Lady de Montfort, “for being so earnest in your interest for my child.”

“Then will you between this and the arrival of the Bishop put aside all other study, so that her heart and soul may be engrossed in the confirmation alone ? I have a great many Africans to present, men and women, young and old, most of them those whom Ethna has been reading to for so long a time. Your little girl will be the only “buckra” among them ; but she will not mind that, and they will be most pleased.”

Ethna was rather frightened when she heard of it, but she summoned every energy to prepare herself well, by prayer and meditation, and attending carefully to the instructions of the good priest for whom she had the fondest, deepest reverence.

Negroes have all a very particular liking for everything white, therefore there was not much difficulty in persuading them to dress exclusively in that ; even the men thought it best to forbear wearing the broadcloth surtout they were so proud of, and present themselves in their white linen jackets instead.

Ethna’s dress was of white muslin—made long and training for the first time in her life—perfectly plain,

with only a broad hem, high up to the throat in a full bodice, and close round her wrists, confining loose sleeves. Amid the folds of the muslin on her neck was seen now and then the sparkle of a gold crucifix; her hair hung in wavelets and curls down her back, and a perfectly plain muslin veil was thrown over her head, and fell nearly to the ground.

Ethna was so overwhelmed by the power of the Bishop's words in his sermon that it was with difficulty she kept calm, and they were never forgotten through a long life which followed—for though, perhaps, the very words slipped the memory, in after years the influence they had made an indelible impression.

The Bishop was asked with the priest to lunch at Government House after the confirmation.

As Ethna always dined at this house, she was never turned out of her place whoever might be there, and she was very glad of this to-day, for she had a great desire to see the Bishop again before he went away.

He noticed her directly she entered the room most kindly. Ah! this is the little girl I have confirmed to-day—your own daughter, I believe." As her father bowed his assent, he added, "I did not expect to have had such a great satisfaction and gratification as this."

After luncheon was over, he went to her, and laying his hand gently on her neck, saying, "Come and have a talk with me," he led her into the long verandah which

stretched all along the length of the dining-room for the purpose of keeping it cool and shady.

At the end of this verandah was one of those large, very beautiful trees, with very broad, thick leaves, commonly called the indiarubber tree, as the substance always oozes from its trunk at every pore. The shade it affords from the size and thickness of the leaves is most delightful in the tropics.

Under this tree was a seat, and placing himself on it, with Ethna at his side, he went over again to her the points in his sermon which he had seemed most earnest about, and which he had tried to impress most vividly on the thoughts and memory of his listeners during the time of its delivery.

The little girl listened attentively, and was so influenced by his gentle, kind manner, as to be led to ask many questions, and thus, without being nervous, was really having a talk with the Bishop.

She told him, too, how very difficult it would be to her to follow his rule of life, on account of the faults to which she was most prone.

"But you will try?" he said.

"Oh yes," she answered with a very earnest, emphatic sigh.

"Try, my child," he added, "with every effort—every energy—never flagging—never despairing—never ceasing to pray—and you will succeed."

Rising as he said this, he put his hand on her head and again gave her his blessing.

Ethna ran straight to her own little room and knelt there for long, making resolutions for her future years, should they be bestowed on her.

She never again saw the dear, good Bishop; but though some years afterwards she heard of his death, he ever lived in her grateful memory.



## CHAPTER IX.

It is now some months since the events of the last chapter; and all the family were again settled at their country seat, Gomier.

From the time of Ethna's beginning to learn to ride she had been making rapid progress. It gave her father great pleasure to teach her; for though she was rather timid, she soon acquired a very graceful seat, with a firm hand in holding her bridle, and did him credit both in canter and trot.

She had been allowed to join both her parents in their evening ride; they felt confidence in her safety, and she herself had a quiet self-assurance of becoming an expert horsewoman by and by. At any rate, she could have plenty of practice, for the pretty, little cream-coloured pony, kept entirely for her use, was always ready to be ridden, and had quite as much spirit as his mistress.

The only thing she had to conquer was not to get frightened when little Gipsy began to frisk, which he very often did as soon as she was mounted, as if he wished to say, "Come now, and let us have a good bit

of fun together. 'I'll jump and toss you as high as ever you like to go.' Then, when she patted his neck and said, "Quiet, Gipsy, quiet; I don't like to be tossed so; I only like a nice, little, gentle canter," he would shake his head like saying, "Oh! how cross of you; it would be so delightful to have a good dancing and jumping about." But he had a "beautiful mouth," and he soon understood by the steady handling of the bridle, which the Waterloo soldier had taught her right well, that he must not jump, but be content to go quietly, and just as she liked.

As it was impossible to drive up and down these hills in a carriage, the only way was riding. And as the nearest church to them was that in the town—Roseau—the only way of getting to Mass was to ride down as soon after daybreak as possible, and breakfast in town after Mass. On Sundays they always remained on for High Mass, and then returned to the country after luncheon.

The negroes, including the servants of the house, as well as those who worked the estate, all went to Mass on Sundays and other days of obligation as regularly as their mistress, Ethna, and the children.

Sir Romuald de Montfort, unhappily, was not yet a Catholic, to the great grief of his very patient wife, who, to see this, had been praying and hoping from the day of their marriage. But what made it worse for her to bear, was the fact that he was one in heart, but lacked the courage to be made one really.

Her influence and her teaching had completely convinced him of the Truth, and he never, in consequence, entered the little Protestant chapel which had been built as described in a former chapter, or joined in any Protestant innovation whatever; while he was the ready advocate of every Catholic measure; excusing himself, as it were, to those in whom it caused wonder, "that such suited the negro population best." "They were Catholics and were easily governed as such." "It would not do to introduce any innovation among them, for anything contrary to their principle might create rebellion."

This was the reason he gave when the Protestant members of council urged any measure likely to offend Catholics, such as obliging them by law to work on days of obligation; these days being always kept by them as festive holidays.

The real reason, however, which caused him to act thus, was because within his inmost heart he felt it to be right. The Church ordered it; and he fully recognised within him the supremacy of this divine authority; yet he lacked courage to confess this openly; he could not make up his mind to brave the opinions and scoffs of his fellow-comrades in arms for, as they would call it, "deserting his colours," or, "leaving the faith in which he had been educated;" utterly senseless and rebellious as he had now found out that religious teaching to have been; it had made him honourable and noble, it is true, but just only in the

same way in which heathens are honourable. There was no religious motive in it; no acting for the pure love of God; it was simply for fame and credit's sake; to keep up the dignity of his family and his own personal position, because he was too proud to stoop to anything mean, low, or paltry: and he had come to see all this in himself; and that his motive for action was not the right one. So far had grace been conferred on him in answer to his wife's daily prayers; so far could he see what he ought to do; and yet he lacked courage to act upon it.

Strange, indeed, it was that the valiant soldier who had been in so many battles from his early manhood, who had stood erect and undaunted in front of the enemy, who in very deed had—

“Sought reputation at the cannon's mouth,”

should be wanting in courage to do the thing which his heart within told him he ought to do, which was right to do; and which, too, from the state of conviction he was in, he *must* do, if he wished to secure his eternal salvation.

Though he could wield the sword of a General, and lead on his men to victory or to death, he could remain under the peril of losing his soul for all eternity, for want of courage to brave the taunts and persecution of friends and the world; by submitting himself to the one Divine Authority on earth, Christ's Vicar, the visible head of the Church, and becoming

enrolled among the Almighty's children, the  
of all nations.

Day after day he flagged, and, as is the case  
cowards, day after day he became more cowardly  
moral courage.

Lady de Montfort, who knew him well through-  
through, saw and felt all this. It cannot be  
at, therefore, that, notwithstanding all her re-  
patience, fortitude, constant prayers, and trust  
fidence in God, this fact was as a sword  
through her heart by night and by day.

And yet Sir Romuald de Montfort's case  
a single one ; it is to be seen around us every-  
Though the interests of eternity and the saving  
souls is the one great object of our life on earth,  
we know not for certain whether we shall have  
more short hours granted us wherein to see  
object, we go on dilly-dallying, shilly-shally  
allow the precious moments and hours to  
content in doing nothing ; moments, too, in  
very much may be done.

The broker on the stock exchange, the banker,  
the lawyer will count his minutes, and not  
slip by in which he may make a sum of money.

"My time is my money," he says ; and  
at his watch and calculates how much he  
before its hands tell the next quarter of an hour.

If any one try to steal a few of these moments

him by not being quick enough in the despatch of business, or a little undue talk, how terrible he thinks it to have wasted so much time; he can hardly forgive the offender.

The sportsman and the hunter look eagerly out for the kind of weather likely to be on the morrow—as to its being propitious for hunting or shooting—and on the morning opening up with every promise of the day proving to be favourable to them, how eagerly do they dress and despatch their breakfasts, so as not to lose, unnecessarily, a moment's time.

And the man of business—how does he count his moments so as to make as much of them as possible? and is hardly ever content with the amount of business he may have been able to do in a few of them; but the interests of eternity, the finding out whether he is really on the right road to heaven, and running his course therein so as to win the prize promised on arriving at the end, is a very different matter, and put aside, if thought of at all, till death stares him in the face, and then, though by repentance it may not be too late to obtain forgiveness, it certainly is too late to earn any merit.

Though Sir Romuald de Montfort did not and could not enter the Protestant building for worship because he felt it was wrong, and did not either go to church with his family for fear of being scoffed at, he always made a point of carefully taking them to the door, and being ready again to take them home. This was a

duty he owed them, and for which he could never be taunted but only admired.

Therefore, with just as much earnestness as he ought to have felt in going to Mass himself, was he always ready, at the earliest hour they might wish to go, to escort them.

It was always a very gay scene on the Sunday morning in Dominica.

The negro women all dressed as smartly as they could be in their own peculiar costume, with a number of large brilliant pins and brooches in their turbans, which were always of some very gay colours; their necks covered with bright beads and gold chains; very large, thick, massive gold earrings; very handsome links to fasten the sleeves of their daintily got up cambric or lawn chemise by the band which fitted close below the elbow, leaving room for bracelets to show off the round brown-black arms.

By the hand (always well covered with rings) they led their children, equally well dressed; and were usually accompanied by their husbands carrying the shoes and stockings of the party to put on after they had crossed the rivers which they had to do on their descent from the mountains into town.

The roads from every estate were alive with the happy throng, family after family all trudging hurriedly along to be in good time; and when arrived at the church, the scene there was such as one never sees in England.

The church itself had been most munificently built, though in these regions of hurricanes. It was large itself, and stood in a spacious paved enclosure, having massive iron gates as high as the walls which surrounded it.

Always on the Sunday morning and all other days of obligation this church was as full as it could possibly be; and not only the church, but the enclosure as well, so full that members who could not get in were obliged to be content to stand in the streets, and the crowd would extend for some distance beyond the gates.

When the bell rang at the canon they all prostrated themselves on the ground, and remained so till after the elevation.

This picture was especially beautiful on Palm Sunday, for then every negro—man, woman, and child—carried with them to church a branch of palm; and as the various species abounded there, from the high-crested “mountain cabbage” and “date trees” with the lofty “cocoa nut,” down to the smallest of the tribe, it may be imagined what the scene was.

The negroes climb the mountains the day before to provide themselves from the different kinds with such branches as suit their size and strength, the children having generally a small one from the palm shrub, of which we have the sago.

Nor in any place could Corpus Christi be more beautifully observed; for the three days previous the negroes are all busy setting palms and flowers; with



posts to build sheds wherein to erect altars in various places round about the church, so as to induce a long and prolonged procession. They cover and line these sheds with palm-branches, and then hang flowers and fruit within till the roof and sides are covered. Then the most lovely little altars are erected by these negroes, whom all the world consider to be barbarous and without taste.

The priests take the greatest pleasure in indulging them, and so devoted are they to the priests that they almost live on their numerous offerings of fruit, vegetables, bananas, farine, fish which they catch, fowls, and parts of their pigs and goats when killed.

Where among the lower order of English do we find this? The negro finds it his greatest pleasure to take the best part of anything he has to the priest—a *Catholic* negro—and it is his own free-will offering, at his own expense and labour.

Remember, English reader, that these negroes I am writing of were *Africans*; perhaps you will hardly believe that among them were many born savages.

Lady de Montfort was very far from strong just now; indeed she was in a very delicate state of health, the wear on her constitution from doing so much for others had made greater ravages than the climate.

She was compelled for awhile to give up all going to church, as the rides to town and back, in addition to the fatigue of Mass, were too much for her.

There was nothing, however, to prevent Ethna going, though she lamented the necessity for leaving her mother at home.

It was a great trial for Lady de Montfort to have to submit to this advice from her doctor, and to bear for awhile the not going to church that she might have the perfect rest she needed ; but she could not conceal from herself that her constitution was breaking, and that, if she were not very careful, her health would suffer very materially, and her life, perhaps, be sacrificed.

One Sunday morning it happened that Gipsy had either been neglected to be shod, or else had cast a shoe in the night, and therefore was not fit to be ridden.

This, however, did not seem to prevent any difficulty in the way of going to church. Papa felt sure Ethna could ride his grey, and seemed rather anxious she should try ; it would be a proud thing to take her into town upon it, as showing her good riding.

Ethna, though feeling very timid about it, thought her papa knew best ; so it was decided she should, and he would ride Chestnut, the horse he generally rode when Lady de Montfort was mounted on his favourite grey.

The beautiful high-bred grey was always, apparently, rather proud and pleased to have to carry Lady de Montfort ; he understood her firm, gentle hold ; had been accustomed for some time to be ridden by her,

and seemed to feel it to be an honour; but never a little girl on his back before; it struck him rather strange; and he was quite conscious that his little, light figure he scarcely felt was somewhat frightened.

They went on their way, however, very pleasantly indeed in the bright, sweet, early morn. The girl felt that though the weight he had to carry was very significant, and the hand which guided rather treacherous, yet that he had his master close beside him, would see to his behaving well.

Ethna had a very pretty, little Maltese spaniel which she was extremely fond, and the little dog returned her affection so deeply that it could not be away from her.

It was always a trouble to keep it at home when she went for a ride; but this was quite necessary, as it was not strong enough to run so far and follow a pony.

The servants fancied this morning they had caught it quite safely; but somehow or other it had managed to elude them.

It caught sight of its mistress just as she turned the last corner of the road which was seen from the house, but, very cunningly, did not run after and sought to hide itself then, seeming to know that if it had done so it would be caught up at once and imprisoned. Waiting a moment when no one was looking, it crept slyly away under the hedges—following them at a

distance, and keeping carefully concealed among the bushes of the wayside; it kept stealing on in this way till they came to the foot of the hill; and when no one else was in sight the little creature sprang out, and came jumping up about the grey, telling Ethna that in spite of all the efforts of the servants to keep it back, it had still managed to follow her.

"O papa! here's Sylvia, what shall we do? it will never be able to follow us all the way, and there is no one to take it back."

"We must let it try now, dear; it was very stupid of the servants to allow it to follow us; but it must run on now. "If I find it getting tired I will take it up on my saddle."

Poor Sylvia felt at once it had done something wrong, and that both its mistress and her father were displeased; it shrank away behind, still following, however, in a very determined way.

They came at last to the pretty river before-mentioned as forming one of the boundaries to the estate, and which they must cross. They did so, and almost immediately afterwards they were alarmed by most piercing cries from the poor little dog, as if it were in great agony.

"O papa!—poor Sylvia! what can be the matter with it?"

The grey pricked his ears and seemed alarmed, too.

"Wait quietly for me here, and I'll turn and see after it; it is close at hand; I'll take it up. It was

hot, very likely, and the cold water of the river has cramped it in crossing—or, perhaps, it has fallen off the crossing-stones into the deep water.

He turned to do this; Ethna instinctively turned too, but stopped her horse there, as she was told to stand still and wait quietly.

Her father disappeared from sight in trying to find the little dog on the banks of the river. Fresh and louder cries came from it at this moment; the grey gave a snort, and before Ethna could be aware of what he was going to do, or be in the least prepared for it, the horse turned sharply round, bolted, and galloped off into town as fast as it could possibly go.

Imagine the agony of the father as he heard this. The poor little dog was quite neglected and forgotten; he came up just in time to see his steed flying through the air with Ethna still in the saddle, but, evidently, unseated, and he could not doubt the result.

A turn in the road hid them from his sight, and he dared not hurry after for fear of adding fresh impetus to the frightened animal.

As quickly, however, as he felt to be prudent he followed, and after turning the corner, which then showed him some length of the road, he saw the horse in the distance still rapidly pursuing its course, but without the rider.

Where was Ethna? He could not see his child. There was a gulley full of stones through which in very rainy seasons a brooklet used to flow; and he

shuddered at the thought of her having been thrown there. This was the case, however. On coming up he saw her lying on her side, perfectly senseless upon the stones, and looking like a corpse, with blood on her face from a wound on her cheek.

The skirt of her habit was torn off; a great mercy, as she might have been dragged by it, and at the great speed with which the horse was going been dashed to pieces.

Tottering with anguish and horror Sir Romuald alighted, slung the rein on his arm, and caught up his almost lifeless child.

They were still a mile from the town, and no house near; he went on, leading his horse and carrying his apparently dead child in his arms.

After a little while he met a negro who, being on his way to town, had been much alarmed by the grey dashing past him in side saddle but without a rider, and turned to see what could be the matter.

“Eh! me massa.”

“Go and get me a hammock somewhere, my good Sam, will you?” and the man ran off towards the nearest house.

The inmates here had noticed the horse they knew so well, and had got their hammock slung ready for use in case of need, feeling sure some serious accident had happened either to Lady de Montfort or “Miss Ethna.”

Two men soon trudged along with it, on hearing

Sam's tale ; and met Sir Romuald with his burden in a very short time.

Ethna, still unconscious, was laid in it. They stopped at the house to see whether eau-de-cologne, cold water, or any simple remedy would revive her ; but seeing their efforts useless, her father urged a quick push on into town, and mounting his horse again, dashed away in pursuit of a doctor to be in readiness the moment they arrived.

They laid her on her couch, and two medical men were in attendance directly.

All hung over the poor child, fearing the worst. She was not dead ; but it seemed so very difficult to bring her out of this death-like swoon which had lasted so long.

The doctors then resorted to bleeding, and at length she showed signs of revival. A faint hue came to her cheeks ; she stirred—turned—and at last opening her eyes, gazed in wonder first at one, and then at another, not knowing at first where she was, what had happened, or why she was thus hung over.

Presently feeling an odd sensation in her arm she looked down at it, and started to see blood running from it into a basin.

The doctor then put his thumb on it, stanching the stream, and bound up the arm.

She then recognised her father, who, with wistful gaze into her eyes, had got his hand on her forehead.

"What was that music, papa?" were the first words she uttered.

Sir Romuald started. Was his child still not herself? or had she been so near the gates of heaven as to have heard some of its songs?

"Ah! may be da been di sodger music," said the black nurse who was at her side. And then Sir Romuald remembered that they had passed near the place where the militia had been gathered for parade and going to Mass.

This was shortly after he had placed her in the hammock; she was to all appearance at the time quite lifeless, and yet she must have heard it.

This was the case. The only thing she knew or recollected at all about the accident was first the starting off of the horse and the fright at finding herself utterly powerless to stop him,—and then the sound of music.

"What is it, papa?—what is the matter?—where am I?—where is Sylvia?"

"You were thrown from your horse, my darling, very near town; so I brought you here for Madame Solange and the doctors to take care of you. Don't you know anything about it?"

Ethna shook her head.

"You will be all right soon, I hope. Are you in any pain."

She put her hand to her cheek and pointed to the bruise.

"Yes, a stone must have grazed your cheek as you



fell; but that is nothing—it will soon be better. I daresay it is very tender now, but when the blackness of the bruise is gone, I don't think there will be even a mark left, for the wound will soon heal."

She put her hand to her head, which ached and felt dizzy.

"Does it ache, darling?"

She closed her eyes, saying "Yes," wearily.

Then she suddenly thought of her arm, not understanding about the blood she had seen running.

"The doctor bled you, dear, because you had fainted—that was to revive you, I believe, and it seemed to do so, for you came to yourself while the blood flowed. I am afraid you must be very tired. Won't you try to go to sleep?"

She turned her head round on her pillow as if inclined to do his bidding, but in such a weary, weak way, that those who watched her felt anxious.

No other injury was discovered, however, at the time, from the fall than the scratch on her cheek, which proved of no consequence.

Had they searched more particularly they might have found out that an injury was inflicted on the spine, which, as long as she retained youth and strength, with all her lively energy and high spirits, remained unnoticed.

A little watchful, tender, loving care when yet young, and soon after this accident, might have saved her much suffering in after life; but the events which

followed interfered with this at first;—and afterwards the many duties which crowded on prevented all thought of self-care.

Sir Romuald sat and watched the restless weakness which she seemed to suffer from—almost expecting her every moment to go off again into another swoon of insensibility like the last.

He looked at his watch; the hours for Mass and breakfast had passed by; it was now near one o'clock; he ought to take some steps for breaking these sad tidings to his wife. He had sent on a caution that no one should mention anything about it in her hearing, or tell her at all of what had happened; and he intended to go home with a smiling face just at the time when she would be expecting their return—about two o'clock, and account to her in some light way for the cause of Ethna's remaining in town. He thought of saying that one of their friends had begged to be allowed to keep her for a few days' visit.

There was plenty of time for this; so he watched on, not liking to leave until she fell asleep.

They gave her at last a composing draught, and after a while she really went off into a sweet calm slumber which bid fair to restore her perfectly.

When the hour arrived, at which, had he been taking Ethna home, they would have started together, he mounted his horse and returned—alone.

## CHAPTER X.

ON this same Sunday morning Lady de Montfort had risen earlier than usual; it was so sweet, so clear, so bright, she could not rest as long as she had been advised to do.

The very fragrant scent of the orange blossoms from the trees near her bedroom window, and the coffee-blossoms from the fields afar; the odour wafted from the flowers in the parterre below, and those in pots and boxes in the veranda round the house roofed in by various jasmynes—all seemed to bid her rise and come out to inhale the pure, soft zephyr they were so enjoying.

A heavy dew had fallen the night before, and the early morning in the tropics after this is always more beautiful than any other.

Nature seems to show her gratitude in this way—by giving thanks to the Almighty in a radiant flash of beauty.

Rain has the effect of drenching; and long after it is over, the drops keep falling from the plants even when the sun shines brightly, and they don't look fresh and

sweet, but drowned and dripping ; while, on the contrary, a heavy dew seems to invigorate and enliven the plants.

All the buds then open out, and look as if decked with pearls and diamonds ; the soft, sweet mountain breezes play among the bushes, and they appear to be dancing with joy.

Gomier was seated on the centre of three sloping hills, with deep ravines between each ; and these three hills again embedded beneath an amphitheatre of majestic, but beautifully green-clad mountains, rising high up into points which seemed to touch the deep-blue sky.

These mountains lay to the east of the hills, and ran round from north to south, opening a splendid frontage to the west of the ocean.

Half-past seven used to come before the sun could be discerned to tint with gold the tree-tops on their summit.

Shades of gold would then appear to stream down here and there, contrasting with the deep black-green of the ravines below, and as he travelled higher up, trees lower down would catch the glow and wave and sparkle to his beams, till later on few shadows showed, and later still a blaze of brightness swam around.

Lady de Montfort loved to be up long, long before this hour, even in the deep, grey dusk of early daybreak.

It was dangerous for her, and it was now forbidden ; but she loved it, for the air was then so cool, so fresh, so sweet.

She liked to watch the fire-flies all flitting to and fro  
and the night-birds stealing lazily to their nests.

The whirr of the wood-beetle then ceased.

The grasshoppers and crickets, which had kept  
night alive with chirps, now hushed their voices.

The crapauds barked no longer.

The woodpecker had stopped his tapping, and  
rattle of a snake no more was heard.

The owl, or "jumby bird," so feared by negroes  
the harbinger of death, dared not once more  
frighten with his screech.

Day peeped, and, listening, lo! in the distance  
coo of the turtledove began.

The parrots fluttered and stretched their wings.

The humming-birds arose, and, buzzing to the op-  
ing flower, sucked its honey while still fresh with dew.

All nature was alive with prayer and praise.

The tamarind-tree unfurled its leaves.

The breadfruit raised its head.

The early-rising negro opens his hut, and with ce-  
bash in hand, he goes to fill it at the running stream.

The conch-shell from afar blows blasts from fishi-  
boats, which having, ere the moon had dipped, been  
busy with their nets, now bring a load on shore.

Just rising from their couch among the cliffs,  
goats begin to frisk.

The coney jump from rock to rock, and flying-  
spring high in air.

And yet 'twas dusk!

But, looking out upon the sea, a sail steers on, just visible.

All this she loved; it was the hour for prayer, it suited her; but now she was forbidden to arise thus early, and yielded.

Day glimmered, brightened, and stole on. On this sad Sunday morning though, she had been rather earlier than was allowed, that she might join in the Mass with those who had gone to church.

The breakfast over, she read some Bible stories to her little boys.

Then taking up a book of meditations, she bid them follow her to the harbour and bring their "Noah's Ark" that they might play with it, and run about upon the lawn, while she took care of them till their nurse returned.

When, on describing the coming home of Sir Romuald, this harbour was spoken of, it was said to overlook the road from town, for it was there that Ethna waited to catch the first glimpse of her father. The road passed on all along beside the garden hedge, and went much higher to the top of the ravine, where it continued round to the estate situated on the hill the other side of the ravine.

Just at this rounding point an echo was produced by any sound or word on it when passing; so that horses' hoofs, when treading there, sounded in the harbour as if quite near, and voices too.

Any one speaking at that part, though some distance off, could be distinctly heard in the arb often, when sitting there at work, Lady de Mon had been made aware of the arrival of visitors this estate by hearing what they said when round the ravine coming towards her house.

Some of the negroes belonging to this neighbourhood had returned home from the early Mass, had heard all that had happened ; and one who had a particular friend at Gomier felt so anxious to see her friend, and talk to her about it, that although some distance from her walk to town, she determined to go over to see her.

Old Noel, the cowherd, who was so fond of "missey" that he always saved the best of his milk for her to drink, had been looking to his cows grazing on a savanna just above the ravine which separated the two hills and estates.

He was returning home when, just at the round point of which mention has been made where the ravine was produced, he met with Justine on her way to see her friend Julienne.

"Eh ! Uncou Noel, morror. Whey you come from

"Morror, Sissey, morror. Wha mak you come to Gomier dis time, eya ?"

"Eh ! me bin na Mass dis morning ; dey tell me 'bout wha happen ; me sha'n't stay whey ma dey ; so sorry ; me so frighten ; me want fou talk wi' a' de. Eh la ! di poor gubner, di poor Miss Ethna !"

Lady de Montfort's book dropped on her knees; her face paled; she started—listened.

"Wha da? Wha you say? Wha fa you say dat?" exclaimed Noel.

"Eh la! you no sabby? dey no tell you?"

"No; me bin mind cattle a' di morning; da now me go home; tell me wha da, wha mak you frighten?"

"Da Sam wha bin go get di hammock; he tell Auntie Nannie, da Auntie Nannie wha tell me; he bin jis past di riviere Canarie; di litti dog cry! cry! cry! he bin frighten; he look; he say, "wha da?" den di big white horse gallop, gallop; he most trew Sam down. When he look, he see he no hab nobody na saddle; he bridle all hung down; he gallop, gallop, gallop; na one minute he no see um 't a', 't a'.

"Den he run go see wha mak di litti dog cry; den he see massa; massa bin carry Miss Ethna; he 'abit a' tear na pieces; he hab blood pon he face; he look so; s'pose he dead.

"Massa say, Sam, go get me one hammock; Sam run; he go na Body Casima house ax dem sen one hammock; den dey run tak di hammock go find massa.

"Oh! di poor massa bin so weary, he look so frighten; he put Miss Ethna na di hammock; dey trow water 'pon he face; he no sabby 't a' 't a'; den di massa bin frighten plenty, plenty; he got pon he horse; he gallop, gallop for get doctor. Eh la! me so sorry; eh



la! me so frighten; wha me go do; me want talk wi Julianne. S'pose he sabby? poor Miss Ethna; he no go dead; eh! no! no! no!"

Poor old Noel spread out his hands and raised them towards the skies, while he looked up crying a yell in true negro style.

"Eh! yah! Eh! yah! Eh! yah!—da no true. Come, a' we go see." And they ran down the road, not thinking what unconscious mischief they had done by talking just at the point where the echo repeated it close to the harbour.

From the time of the first start Lady de Montfort had listened with that intense yearning for more which the agony caused by what she had heard could alone create.

Before they came to the end of what has been repeated she had swooned a death-like swoon, and lay stretched on the ground, having sunk first on the harbour seat; then, from no one being near to help, she had fallen from that to the ground and hurt herself seriously in falling.

The little boys were gamboling about on the grass in merry glee, and running past in front of the harbour, one trying to catch the other, were suddenly startled with horror to see their mother lying apparently lifeless on the ground.

One ran, and, stooping down, covered her face with kisses; another stood and screamed with grief and fright, and the other ran off with all his speed to call

Zezelle<sup>1</sup> the maid, Babet, or any one else he could find.

Zezelle and Babet came in great haste and so did others. They lifted their mistress very tenderly, and, for negroes, were very wise in what they did. They carried her to bed, and knowing all the means likely to bring her back to consciousness, they soon succeeded.

But immediately afterwards she began to groan and sigh as if in great pain.

She started and looked round. Where am I? What has happened? Oh! what dreadful tale was that I heard? Zezelle,—Babet, what was it?

They had not heard what she had, and became more alarmed about the state their mistress was in.

"Lie still, me missis—go sleep—may be da di feber."

A ray of hope crossed Lady de Montfort's face. Could it be fever? Was it an attack of fever that had told her all that?

She lay for a while thinking it all over—then felt her hands and her brow. Was it fever?—it did not seem so. She put her hand on the pillow, knowing that if she had fever the pillow would feel cold.

"No! 'tis not fever, Babet, but I am very ill. Oh, how dreadful! What can have happened?"

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<sup>1</sup> Lady de Montfort had taken out with her an English maid, but she became next to useless, and almost a burden, from not accommodating herself to the climate and different mode of life. A clever Mustee girl, whose mother was an African, taken in under the English maid to help and learn, soon became so useful, so competent, and so faithfully attached, that Lady de Montfort was glad to send home the English maid and put Zezelle in her place.

They caught her hands and rubbed them, for they were very cold, and they saw their dear mistress was suffering from pain.

Presently she whispered something, and off started Babet, who soon returned, bringing with her the nurse who had always attended the negro women, but never before Lady de Montfort ;—her own nurse, however, was living in town, and there was no alternative at the time.

They should have sent off with all the speed possible for the doctor, but were not conscious of the danger. Babet had strictly obeyed her mistress, and felt every confidence in the nurse she got.

When Sir Romuald arrived, as he thought to break most gently and cleverly what had happened to his wife, and to assure her there was no cause for alarm, he was met, to his great horror, by the tidings of her having been very ill,—the swoon in the arbour, and her just having given birth to a still-born child. More dreadful still, he found on going in to see her, that the cause was her having heard suddenly what he had taken such pains to prevent.

Lady de Montfort, feeble and weak as she was, held out her hands to him as he entered.

“Oh ! thank God, *you* are safe !” she cried ; “but where is Ethna ?—what has happened to her ?”

“She is safe, my precious wife. But what have you heard ? What has made you ill ? Who has dared to frighten you and tell you wrong things ?”

"Nobody told me—I heard—something said it, but nobody told me." And here she fainted off again, though only for a few minutes, from excessive weakness.

Rallying again, she smiled and kissed his hand to reassure him—gazing up into his face to try to find out all the truth.

"Thank God, you are safe; but my darling—my precious Ethna—something has happened to her,—is she alive?—is she well?"

"She is safe—she is well; but *you* are ill. This faintness won't do. I must go for the doctor. Will you keep quiet till I return—rest assured there is no danger. I'll gallop down for Burrell at once, and be back with him directly."

He left her abruptly, for he was most terribly alarmed by the appearance of her countenance and extreme weakness. He felt that no one could fly for the doctor as quickly as he could.

What would he not have given at that moment for a telegraph wire to send a telegram by, instead of leaving her as he now must do? but there was nothing else to be done—or, rather, better to be done—for no negro could ride as he did, nor would they be so likely to succeed in making the doctor come quickly.

On quitting the room he called to Zezelle—"Take your mistress some port-wine saugaree at once; make it strong, and get her to take it all. Tell her I bid you do it, and that I begged her to drink it all. Stay by her, watch her closely, and make the nurse do so too; fan

L

her, and keep the vinaigrette close at hand. I shall be back again in a quarter of an hour."

He vaulted on his horse—spurred it, and tore down the hill at a furious pace.

Lady de Montfort had looked yearningly after her husband when he left the room, as if she wished to call him back and did not like his going, but seeing him bent on getting the doctor, was silent.

She became weaker and weaker, more and more faint; and called the nurse, as if conscious that something was wrong, and that she had not been so well attended to as with the clever expertness of her own nurse, a very superior coloured woman.

She had not, in fact, been as skilfully seen to as was needed, for the swoon in the first place, and then the terribly awkward fall from the seat on to the ground, which had brought this on, necessitated greater and more eminent skill than usual.

She had been, and was still, in the greatest danger; she was requiring now, and ought to have had from the first, the most practised attention, and the doctor should have been with her immediately after the fall.

Yet she had been, and was still, solely in the hands of her attached, but in this case ignorant Africans, who, besides being incapable, were so distracted with fright, distress, and nervousness, that though most excellent and *clever* nurses when under self-command, were now totally inefficient.

Zezelle, however, did make the saugaree strong

and very palatable—and cut some very thin slices of bread and butter, such as she knew her mistress liked, to tempt her to eat, bringing it to her very quickly after her master left.

Lady de Montfort was lying gazing very wistfully at the crucifix standing on the little altar in her room, and a beautiful “Guido” of our Saviour which hung over it, as if in very deep thought and commune, and a sweet, placid expression of resignation played upon her face.

On seeing the saugaree, and being told her husband wished her to take it, she tried to rise to do so, but could not.

They put their arms under her and raised her, so as to enable her to drink; they put it to her lips and she sipped, but could not swallow.

“Oh me, missis! eat somethin’ first, me cut di bread so fine—do me, missis.”

She took the bread and butter within her lips, and made an impression with her teeth on it; but it was of no use; she sank back on the pillow quite exhausted.

She gazed again as if into distance, and the sweet expression on her face made all quite silent with awe.

The poor, black creatures round her did everything they could to try to restore her, with eager anxiety and the warmest affection, hearing her faintly utter Ethna’s and her husband’s names as if in prayer for them.

Presently she raised her hands, extending them out as if towards some one with a sweet, radiant, loving happy smile.

This rested on her face for a few moments, and then as her hands fell slowly and crossed on her breast, gradually faded, for her eyes closed, and she ceased to breathe.

She had finished her work—she was gone to her rest.

Zezelle, Babet, the nurse, and all the others who had flocked to her room earnestly desiring to do something, and show their love for her, when they saw her extend her arms with that beautiful expression on her face, all sunk on their knees.

They remained so, struck with awe and a sense of a supernatural Presence, and continued in prayer, with clasped hands, gazing at her—seeing her die, and quite unable to do anything.

They were wrapt up in devotion; the influence of such a death-scene kindling their hearts to love, and raising their thoughts to heaven.

The sound of horses' hoofs coming at a furious pace was heard. In an instant after Sir Romuald and the doctor entered; they started with horror; but the sight of the crowd of black women all still continuing on their knees with upraised hands in prayer, and the beautiful face and form on the bed, so radiant with calm, sweet expression, soothed them into awe-struck and reverent silence.

The doctor approached—Sir Romuald stealing on behind. He gently felt the pulse; pressed firmer; tried the other hand, and dread passed over his countenance.

Sir Romuald watched him, turned pale, and trembled.

The doctor put his ear down to her mouth; that sweet mouth which had always uttered kindnesses, now closed for ever on earth.

He found the breath had ceased. He reverently laid his hand on her heart. No! not one single sign of life left—cold—cold—all cold—it was becoming marble; life had gone out with that radiant smile—the soul had fled—the lovely tenement alone was left.

And there it lay with its crossed hands—resigned and smiling face—an exquisite subject for the painter or the sculptor.

The black women still knelt around her, tears streaming from their eyes. Oh! who can portray this scene!

The doctor stood and looked, and felt again. He would not believe it. He could not tell it.

Sir Romuald clung to him—stared with wild terror into his eyes to read what they might tell—staggered back, and fell on the floor.

The brave Waterloo soldier who had stood so many battles and dared so many shots; whose nerves had seemed strung to defy all overcoming, was now prostrate—overwhelmed—undone. He who had never yielded, now *conquered!*



*He* must be seen to now. She, who had tended him with the most anxious care was gone; her form lay placid there in the serene sleep of a happy death. It seemed to mock the grief around.

They took him from the room, for he appeared to be turned to stone. It was some time before the strong man could be brought round; and even when himself again, and conscious of his loss, he remained unmoved; all life and energy and strength had fled; he lay as if petrified, and did not speak.

The doctor felt he must be roused and stimulated to exertion, and laid on Sir Romuald's hand his own.

"Come, my dear friend, come, be a man."

"Burrell, I can't bear it!"

"Be brave, my friend, be brave! there are matters to attend to which call for you; no one else will do; your children—your little girl left all alone in town who does not know."

"Oh yes, my gentle child!—my poor, poor children! Burrell, nerve me up and make me do my duty; and then, oh! then, a hollow void—but duty!—never yet have I shrunk from duty." And springing up as if to buckle armour on and off to battle, he summoned courage, strength, and resolution.

The little children had been taken away by their nurse to amuse and keep quiet, as mama was ill.

"I cannot see the children now," he said. "Bring me my horse, I must back to town. Burrell, come

with me—that poor child can't be left there alone ; and—no !—I could not tell her ; will you ?”

On arriving, he went directly to his private room without trying to look at her ; the nerves which had never been unstrung before were now powerless ; and he felt quite unable to look at his so much loved child.

He had one thing to do which must be attended to at once, ready for the morrow.

The dreadful to-morrow ! that certain follower of death in the tropics. No waiting there ; no possibility of keeping the dear loved form one other day ? not one more day ? *one* more ? six hours ? No ! it cannot be ; the ruthless consequence of death forbids it.

To-day, and then the yet more sad to-morrow ; and, then, all over. Gone ! a dreadful dream, a nightmare, and a void.

A something one cannot realise until a long time after.

Oh ! you who pamper so the body, think of this.

Poor Ethna had been sleeping since her father left her.

Doctor Burrell now went in ; he found her dozing still.

“Tis well,” he said ; “she must be told ; but, yet a little respite. I'll go and tell the priest.”

He went and told his direful tale. The shock, the terrible disaster, was even more than the priest could

well bear, inured as he was to such scenes; the tears streamed down his face.

What shall we do without her? How can *they*, her husband and her children!—what shall we, any of us, do without her? How can we bear it? Merciful Heaven!” And he shaded his face in his hands.

“I must go and help them.”

“The little daughter does not know,” the doctor added; “she has been sleeping since the accident, and we have just returned from the death-bed scene which happened only four hours ago.

“Ah well! this sad duty always falls to me. It is my place. I’ll do it. Poor, joyous, happy child! How little did we any of us foresee your early blighting? The care to be now laid on you, and all so early! Mysterious Providence! The useful, all-influencing, all-protecting, guiding, and devoted wife and mother taken away, and this young child put in her place!”

He went to Ethna. She was beginning to rouse a little. He sat down by her side quietly, and she did not hear.

Presently she moved and heaved a little sigh. It was partly weakness, partly from a sense of refreshment. Her face was from him. She turned a little. Her eyes opened. With a vivid sense of waking she looked up, then her hand sought the bruise on her cheek.

"Oh! 'tis very painful!" she said to herself.

Then turning right round she saw her revered director sitting patiently waiting.

She put out both her hands with a bright smile—

"You here! Why did you come? Have you been sitting here? How kind!"

"I came when I heard of your accident."

"Oh! how kind."

"I hope you are not suffering? How was it? Tell me all about it."

"I don't know—I can't remember—I don't know anything. The horse galloped off—I was very frightened—and then I heard some music. I don't know any more. Oh yes, I woke up and saw blood running from my arm."

"Won't you lie still and try to sleep again? I'll fan you."

"No, I can't sleep any more now, talk to me. Oh! isn't it Sunday? Is it time for Mass?"

"All over long ago, and benediction too; 'tis past five o'clock."

"Is it? Where is papa? We ought to have gone back to Gomier long ago."

"Papa has been to Gomier and come back. He went while you were sleeping. You have been asleep some hours—nearly all the day."

"Mama will be wondering why I am not at home."

"That was what took papa away. He went to tell her what had happened."

"Oh, then, that is all right! I am so tired. I cannot get up. I can stay here till to-morrow,—may I not? Papa will let me if I wish it."

"Papa wishes you particularly to go back with him this evening, my dear child. The doctor says it will not hurt you, now you have had such a nice long sleep, and your mama has been very ill."

Ethna sprang from her pillow. "Mama ill! oh, I must go to her directly!"

"Don't be in a hurry, my child, your papa is not quite ready yet. He has several things to attend to before he can go."

"Things to attend to on Sunday, what can they be?"

"Arrangements to make for to-morrow, which cannot be put off."

"Arrangements to make for to-morrow! Why, what can have happened? He never does these things on Sundays. It must be something of importance, or he would wait till to-morrow."

"My poor child, how thankful I am now that we did not lose the opportunity for your confirmation. A great trial has been sent you, and more, young as you are, you are now called to a position which will require all your energy, all your strength of mind, great earnestness, and very much prayer, to enable you to fill in such a way as will please Almighty God.

"Sorrow has come across your blissful, joyous life. Care and thought must now take the place of all your light merriment.

“Your gay and blythesome hours must now be all given up to duty.

“Blight has fallen upon you, but you must learn to turn it to a blessing.

“It is God’s will, the inscrutable will that we cannot understand, but which we know is right, to which we must submit without a murmur, and feel sure that He orders all things well.”

Ethna had clasped her hands while listening to these words in terror, and looking up with agonised, inquiring eyes, she said—“What do you mean? What can you mean? What is it? What have I to do? To nurse mama? I’ll nurse her all my life. I love to do it. I’ll never leave her. I’ll never wish to leave her. If she is so ill that she never can be well again all her life, I’ll stay with her and nurse her, and love her, and make her happy, and amuse her.

“Oh! don’t talk to me of blight and sorrow; I shall be so happy in nursing her and doing everything she wishes, that I shall not care for any other happiness—dear, dear mama! No, there’s nothing in the world I would not do for her. I never can be tired, day and night, night and day. Don’t fear my not being strong enough. The pleasure of being a comfort to her will make me bear everything.

“Let me go to her at once, whatever is the matter, however dreadful to witness, to nurse and to watch. Dear, dear mama! you who have done so much for me, you shall not find your little child wanting in

trying to do her duty; but you shall see the pleasure it will give her to wait on you, and comfort you, and do everything for you better than any one else can do it."

The priest let her go on till she had vented her feelings and stopped. He then said—

"My child, but if it be God's will that this should be denied you."

A pause—her eyes fell—her cheek blanched.

With the ardour of her last words a roseate hue had dyed the pallor of her weakness; but now it faded away, and a ghastly tinge took its place, as she said with firm self-control, and folding her hands—

"If it be so, I must submit. Self-will and rebellion can be of no avail. But oh! who could deny me this privilege? It is the child's first duty; who would take it from me?"

The priest turned away in anguish. His task was hard indeed. She could not, would not understand him.

"No earthly hand would take it from you, but He who orders all things well might do away with the necessity. The duty placed before you now, my poor, dear, suffering child, is to soothe and tend your father; to be, as far as one so young can be, a mother to your brothers."

Ethna had risen from her couch in the energy with which she spoke of going to her mother.

She had stood before him all this while, and now she sprang and caught his hands.

"Oh! what is it? Tell me plainly; tell me all about it. What is it you mean?"

"Your mother was taken very ill this morning; she swooned and fell. No one was by to catch or break the fall, and so she suffered very terribly.

"An injury was caused by it, and from it she has not recovered.

"At about noon she gave birth to a stillborn child, and at two o'clock she was taken to be where we know all the souls of the righteous are—'in the hands of God.'

"She was taken by the angels to the gates of Paradise as soon as she had left her mortal frame, and after giving in her last account of how she had used her talents here was admitted to the light of Jesus' love till He shall come again to judgment.

"Think of your darling mother now resting in this blaze of glory.

"Look up with faith and see her radiant with joy, as she feels and knows the influence of this beaming love.

"She kneels and prays for those she left behind; she worships and adores.

"She is shining brightly with the reflection of the glory of Him she praises.

"She is all joy from the love that beams upon her."

Ethna stood with clasped hands and fixed eyes looking up while he spoke, as if she really saw her mother just as he described her; and sympathising in her state



so thoroughly, it was a beaming face of happiness rather than of grief she showed.

But self soon returned. She awoke to the fact of her own severe loss. She was left on earth behind—*without* her—without the mother who now more than ever seemed *all* to her.

“O my mother!” she cried with a piercing shriek; “are you gone, really gone from me? Can I never speak to you again? Never love you, tend you, wait on you *once* more? never see that bright sweet smile again?”

“O merciful Father, help me!” and she sank on her knees, laid her head in her hands on a chair close by, and sobbed as if her heart was rending.

The priest stood by; he did not wish to stop her sobbing, but lifted up his hands and blessed her.

Presently he gently took her up and laid her on her couch.

“Remember, my child, that she who is now so happy, and praying for you there, will like to see you do your duty.

“Will you be ready when your father calls you to go with him?”

She raised her head, crossed her hands upon her breast, and said—“Yes.”

## CHAPTER XI.

THE priest went from Ethna to Sir Romuald. He found him sitting like a marble statue, having done all he had come to do.

Two or three had waited on him, saying, "Our love for the honoured lady will help us to do all things as you would wish." Therefore with a few very special orders all was arranged, and then he sat alone trying to realise to himself his *loneliness*.

The priest took a seat beside him, but did not speak. He had come to be the friend in need, and waited in reverent respect for grief without a word; but his manner, his silence, spoke most fervently.

"Dear father!" murmured Sir Romuald.

The priest rather started; for though in deference to his wife, Sir Romuald had also styled him father, there was a something now in the tone which seemed to acknowledge it really.

"Dear father," he again said, "I must go back, but not till dusk. I am waiting for the twilight before I move—I can't bear meeting any one. Will that poor child be able to go with me?—does she know, and can she be ready?"

"Yes. I broke it to her as carefully as I possibly could; 'twas difficult, for it seemed so hard for her to understand it; but she has borne it bravely, and promised me to be ready when you wanted her."

"Oh! this blow! I can't believe it—I am stunned. Oh! why is it?—so good—so useful—doing so much good! What shall we do without her? What my children will do, I cannot think. If I had committed the greatest crime, could I have had a punishment of a sharper or severer kind than this?"

Then rising with impatience, as if to dash away the evil tempter's thought, he said—

"No, God is just; it is a punishment sent me, which I well deserve, and I'll tell you what it is for."

Then sitting down beside the priest again, he buried his face in his hands, and said—

"In my heart I have been a Catholic for a long, long time, but I could not summon courage to confess it and openly profess myself to be one. I have been too proud to submit, and I dreaded what my comrades in arms might say.

"It was her influence, her love, and her holy life that taught me all; and though she never said a word, I knew, I found out, that it was the one yearning prayer of her soul for me.

"I found out all this, and yet I did not yield. I held out stiffly and firmly, though my conscience often told me I was wrong.

"I think now of the joy it would have given her to have had me kneeling beside her before the altar. But she is taken away, and the happiness I might have had in this I am now deprived of. She is taken away because she was a great deal too good for me. This is why such a punishment has been sent me—for not acting at once bravely on my convictions. I waited too long. I cannot give her this joy now!"

"Yes, you can, Sir Romuald. There is joy in heaven among the angels over one sinner that repenteth, and so this of your conversion and submission will be known with them and rejoiced over.

"She also in her place of rest and peace will know of it, and basking in the sunlight of God's love, as I believe her to be, it yet will add to her joy to feel that her prayers in your behalf have been so graciously, so mercifully answered."

"Then will you, as soon as this dread to-morrow is over, attend to me? I will lose no more time. I must make what reparation now remains to me, and she shall not have worked for me in vain."

"Yes, indeed I will; and meanwhile try to look upon this severe and bitter trial as one sent to you in mercy to test your fortitude, your patience, and resignation to the decrees of the Almighty.

"Submit yourself lovingly to the will of Him who holds all power in His hand, who weighs and orders all things well.

"Your loss is terrible beyond compare, but God's  
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love is shown in it. The life you have so far led has won approval, but the perfecting must come before a reward is earned. This only comes through heavy chastening.

"The world, and all its ways has so much sway, a bitter grief is needed to wean the soul away from it, to take it to close commune with its Maker, to make it look more deeply still within, and sift and cleanse itself.

"When joys, like this you've lost, so closely cling around, it is so hard to give one's self entirely to Heaven.

"This trial is sent to purge and purify you, for, as you feel about the punishment, it was deserved.

"One may be very good, but yet not perfect. How much of sin lies hid in even the best-spent day !

"Now grief enables us to search this out. Look at it in this light, my honoured sir; and while you kneel before the throne in acquiescence, acknowledge, too, with worship, the mercy that has sent it.

"Selfishness would wish her back again ; but if you think of her alone—now past all grief, all sin, all weariness—how can you ?

"She strove with all her might for perfectness while yet on earth, and having nigh attained it, God took her to Himself. Then would you have her back ?

"Oh ! kneel, and thank Him for His mercy. Only try to follow her !"

"You are right. My lovely, almost perfect wife !—so good—so beautiful on earth—has now attained to

glory. No! for her own sake, I could not wish her back, but for myself—my children. Oh! it is indeed a bitter trial. God help me!”

This was not just the answer the good priest wished, but he had gained much.

Sir Romuald now sat, with bended head, in tears. The awful suddenness of the blow, which first was like a cannon-shot, and stunned to senselessness, was passing off. Tears were softening him; he was melting into calm submission and humble self-abandonment.

The priest sat by him still—the friend in need the friend indeed—yet waiting to be useful; he prayed and watched, and felt that work was being done.

The twilight gathered in and deepened.

“I think ’tis time,” he said at last; “you must not be too late. Your child, I know, is very anxious to get home.”

“I’m ready; will you call her?”

He found her calm and waiting. Yes, poor child; a firm resolve to do her duty—to give herself entirely up to duty—had so completely nerved her, that she was quite staid and thoughtful.

Duty should henceforth be her watchword, she exclaimed, on rising from her knees.

The picture of her mother should ever be before her eyes,—the imitating her be the first effort of her life.

How, then, would her mother have acted in this case? Why, forget herself to help her father—and so would she.

The meeting him thus bruised was hard. She took his hands in hers with reverence and kissed them. She looked into his face with eyes that said, My father, let me serve you. She trod on firmly, as if to say, I'm strong enough.

Her father could not speak. The weary fainting child he left this morning, now nerved to energy by grief!

The seeing her unnerved him quite again; 'twas she he thought of most as needing mother;—hers was the age when mother's love was of the greatest value; and for Ethna to step out into worldly contact without her guidance seemed to him impossible.

Thus to be nipped by the bitter frost of sorrow when yet so young in bud!

To have to feel her way without the prop which Heaven and nature gives!

To have to learn from cold, polite, austere, and sometimes envious elegances, all that a mother's love would shield her from!

To gather from experience alone what would have been foretold!

To have her lovely truthfulness—her open-hearted truthfulness—all taken advantage of for want of guard!

To think of this, and know what girls without a mother usually go through, was bitter, but more especially with one like her; so full of impulse, so deeply sensitive, so prone to love, so gentle, meek, confiding, and yet, withal, so proud!

Oh! it was impossible to understand why all she seemed to want was taken away just when, beginning life, the having it seemed most important!

Ethna was again placed in her hammock. Her father rode by her side.

They were going *home*; to what? The loving smile which would have greeted them; where was it? Never to be seen again on earth.

As tree by tree was passed, and stone by stone, nearer and nearer they approached to wretchedness.

"How very sweet the air is as we begin to mount the hill," she said, drawing it in with a sense of being revived by it.

"Yes," with a deep sigh. And oh! then, the cruel thought, the air she loved so much, and which always used so to invigorate *her*. How was it to be borne to live on there without her—that spirit flown—that voice gone!

And then they went on, up, in silence.

At last they came in sight; the magnificent tamarind tree was reached. That tree, the shade of which, over the veranda where she loved to sit, was always so delightful.

Oh! that dear veranda! A pain seized Ethna's heart as she came in sight of it. 'Twas there she had been taught; all her lessons were learnt there. The most of what she knew had come from mother's lips in that veranda. 'Twas there they sat at work and read and talked.



Yes, mother must be there ; she can't be gone !

They passed round to the porch. On either side were beds in which her favourite flowers were placed.

'Twas dark twilight.

The Arabian and Cape jasmines drooped their heads.

A lovely white moss rosebud looking up said, Oh ! she's gone ; let me go with her !

The daturas and tuberoses yielded stronger scent than ever, as in reverential love for her who never more would tend them.

And then the entering !—the cold, dead, still silence.

The further corners of the hall were dark ; no lights as yet were lit.

It seemed a somewhat profanation, with those around in sorrow, to try to make it cheerful.

A lady came towards them, after they had entered, through a door in an opposite recess. This was Mrs. Stafford, who, on hearing of this sad sorrow, had come to try to be of use.

Sir Romuald acknowledged the attention with a bow ; but the keen anguish which the very reason for her being there created, prevented speech, and even more courteous greeting. He rushed by her to his room.

"'Tis kindly meant," he thought ; "but oh ! I wish she had not come."

It seemed to sting the very wretchedness with deeper wounds to have a stranger there.

So Ethna felt, and her sensitiveness awoke. Her soul was wrung with grating pain.

'Tis so—that very, very few know *how* to sympathise, or *how* to show a kindness, be it ever so well meant. Others must enter into our woes; we cannot do without these others; but the tact, the feeling, the *manner* with which we serve each other is the thing—as to whether we give pain or soothe. 'Tis *what* we do and say, and what we *don't*—the style in which 'tis done, where lies the charm.

Ethna answered her coldly at first, but soon repented, for she saw it was well-meant awkwardness. Had not her mother gone everywhere to sympathise and be useful to all in distress? Mrs. Stafford was only trying to imitate her, but she wanted that refinement of feeling which secured success.

It was kind to go and be useful. It would have been kinder to have kept out of sight; done a great deal, but not have allowed it to be known.

Mrs. Stafford fussed over her about taking food and wine, begging her to have a good night's rest, and so on. She had followed Ethna to her room, and it was difficult to get rid of her. Patience and gentleness at last succeeded, however, and Ethna bade her good-night with many thanks, hoping that a comfortable room had been prepared for her.

She was alone at last. Presently a gentle tap came at the door. "Oh! is she come back again?" The door opened.

"Oh ! me dear litti missey," said Babet, coming in with a cup of milk. "Da Noel, wha sen dis to you, he tell me say—Drink um, me missey ; he warm ; da now he milk um, he go do you good. Drink um, me missey."

The tears rolled down Ethna's cheeks ; this simple sympathy was so sweet. She drank off the milk and said, "Tell Noel he is very good to think of me."

"Tank i, me missey,—tank i, me missey !" And softly, without another word, did Babet leave her.

Ethna now stole to the door of the dressing-room which opened into her own, and here she stopped. Poor, weary, fainting child ! sustained alone by energy.

"How can I enter ? and yet, my darling, precious mother, I must be with you to the last. I must see you ; I must brave it !"

She knelt down and said her evening prayers.

Last night when these had been gone through she had just parted from her mother.

"You will be up early in the morning, my precious child" (with a warm embrace) ; "I shall not see you before you leave. Good-night. Sleep well, darling !" —"Good-night, dearest mama." And now to think of these words, and feel they were the last !

And as she knelt, sob upon sob continued, but, praying all the while, at last became subdued, then entered from her own her mother's dressing-room.

Often in after years did Ethna think of this sad night, and wondered how it was she had gone through it.

Her weariness, her faintness, the aching of her limbs, and bruises from her fall were all forgotten.

The only thing remembered was the fact that she had for this night left her who to-morrow would be buried.

She stood trembling in the dressing-room before entering the sacred chamber. Where was her father? Should she find him there?

At length the door was opened; she looked in. There was the white bed and the stretched figure on it; on either side were placed three tall tapers, giving to the large lofty room a faint, dull, glimmering light.

Zezelle, Babet, and another were kneeling in the dark recesses, but not her father; he felt differently, he could not bear it.

She seemed to gather courage after entering, and crossed to Babet.

"Go and get some rest," she whispered, "and take the others with you—I wish to be alone—and I'll stay here."

Babet expostulated strongly; Ethna put her fingers on her lips for silence, looked pleadingly into her face, and pointed to the door.

It was impossible to resist the firm, though mild, determination even in the child, and they had been accustomed to obey her, so they yielded now.

Then she was alone with death! Her valued, precious, so very deeply-loved and venerated mother!—the soul was gone to Paradise, but the holy tenement, unable now to speak to her, to look at her, lay there.

She approached gently and started back.

“Why, surely!—oh! she’s only sleeping!—so sweet!—so very beautiful! No! this can’t be death!” She kissed the cheek. “Ah! yes—’tis marble—the lips—oh! chilly cold!

“My mother! oh, my mother! would that I had loved you even better than I did! Oh! that I had never made you anxious! never caused you care. And what can I do now? You are gone from me; even this dear face, these hands, will all be gone to-morrow.

“I seem to feel you see me, hear me, know what I am doing; and if so, I promise you that you shall see how hard I’ll try to be what you would wish me.

“I’ll take care of the children; I’ll try to soothe papa; I’ll remember all you’ve taught me.

“I’ll be your own dear child, and do your bidding; only love me still, dear mother, and pray for me in Paradise as you did here.”

Alas! there came no answer. The hands that crossed themselves upon her breast were stiffened; the lips and eyes that closed with death were cold.

Ethna felt them, kissed them, but they could not move; the smile still rested on her face, but that was all.

She knelt and watched her. Then she thought—

"Her flowers in the parterre ought surely to be here; they seemed to ask it as I passed them by. I'll go and fetch them."

Out in the dew, with basket in her hand, she roamed, and culled the sweetest she could find.

A light was flickering in her father's room. "Did he go in before I did? Has he been there and could not bear to stay? I should not wonder. They made me take some milk; he has not taken anything—my poor dear father!—I'll make them take him in some wine."

Again she knelt beside her mother, weaving some garlands all of white.

A wreath of jasmines, 'twas for her head; she put it on.

A cross of lilies lay below her hands.

The sweet moss rosebud, which had asked so piteously, was placed within her fingers with her rosary.

Still she knelt on, and prayed, and watched alone, while others slept, or lay in agony, as she feared her father did, all through this solemn night; and as the flowers faded, she replenished them with fresh ones.

The early morning woke; the moon still dimly shone; the stars were yet alight with fading twinkle.

She sallied forth again. The dewdrops fell upon her head and gemmed her hair; but without heed she sought the arbour.

Was it here her mother fell? Ah! yes; the creepers

had been crushed by it ; and there, lying open at the very page, the book she had been reading, left in that place unheeded by those who carried her away in terror.

“ Oh ! what a treasure ! ” and grasping it, she placed a marker on the leaf, that the words there printed might be learned ; she could not see them then.

She sat and thought. Oh ! could her mother’s spirit meet her there, in any place, to have some commune, it would be sweet.

“ I dare not wish for it. She prays for me ; oh ! that’s enough. Sweet mother, rest in peace ! ”

At sunrise she returned, bringing more flowers that had opened with the light, and these she twined and put in water for the coming hour which would be the last.

The candles had kept burning all the night.

Babet now appeared to see that all was as it should be.

“ Ah, Missey Ethna, wha fa da you no been sleep ? Come way, go sleep ! ”

Ethna laid her hand on Babet’s mouth, then led her from the room. She could not bear a whisper to be uttered there.

“ Ask Noel for my cup of milk. I’ll drink it when you bring it me.”

“ The children ! They must be up by this time, and have had their breakfast. Poor Otway, perhaps, would like to see mama. I’ll go to them at once.”

"Here's sister come!" they cried. "Where have you been? We didn't see you all day; you never came home from church. Why, you've been crying, and you've got a bruise and a cut upon your face. What is the matter? Mama was very ill when you were at church; how is she now? We've been very good, and not made any noise. Is she better?—we were so frightened when we saw her lying on the ground."

"She's quite well now!"

"Quite well! Oh! then we may go to her!"

"Dear Otway, I meant 'quite well,' because she is more closely in God's presence. Mama has often talked to you of death. You remember when my kind nurse Annette died, how dear mama explained to you that she was gone to be more near to God, and that all people who are very good on earth go there."

"Oh yes! the angels take them on their wings and fly with them to Paradise. I know—mama has told me many pretty tales about it—when they reach the gates they knock, and say, 'We've brought a soul from earth who has been very good, and worked for God, and done what it was bid!' and then the soul is taken in, and there it rests in peace, and is so happy. Oh, I know all about it; mama has often told me."

"Well then, darling, our dear mama we love so much has gone there now. She was very ill indeed, and the angels came and took her up to God."

"Then what makes you cry? she's so very happy!"



"Oh! because we've lost her. We shall never see her any more as long as we remain on earth; and it is so dreadful to be left alone without her, without our darling mother, who was so kind, so good!"

"But she'll come back again," said little Bernard. "After a while she'll come again. I know she will; she always does come back again when she has gone away. 'Twas because she was so ill she went away. When she's quite well again, she'll come back. I know she will!"

Poor darlings! they could not comprehend it; but the tears rolled down in streams on Otway's cheeks; he being older felt his loss. He hid his head on Ethna's shoulder.

She clasped him tight. Her eldest brother! Her henceforth best companion! She would be mother as well as sister to him.

Without thinking of what she had said before; but only of doing as she would wish to be done by, she added, "Would you like to see her, and kiss her, darling?"

He looked up amazed. "How can I when she's gone away? The angels have taken her to Paradise. I can't go there, unless they come and take me, too. How can I see her?" And he hid his head again. "I'll think of her and love her, and do what she has bid me. I'll never forget her!" and he sobbed aloud. "I wish I had kissed her before she went away. If nurse had only told me the angels were come for her, I might have

kissed her and said good-bye; but now she's gone, I can't."

Poor Ethna felt as if she had not done quite right in her way of telling, but concluded that, perhaps, it was as well it should be so. He had a beautiful idea of death. 'Twas best not to spoil it. So she waited quietly till he was a little consoled, and the younger ones had attracted him.

She then went back to her station beside that pillow, knowing it could not be long; the very latest time would be the evening. "I must stay till the last. I must wait and put the flowers on her. I cannot go before."

Where was her father? In his room. He had given strict orders that no one was to go to him.

He was making ready for his task.

At her mother's side she stayed kneeling, watching, praying; making the most of every moment.

A noise!—intending to be quiet, hushed, moving stealthily—but still a noise!

They entered, the coffin was brought in. She saw it; inspected it; and it pleased her.

It was soft inside, and lined with satin, white as snow, wadded and quilted, with a down pillow of satin covered with lace.

She saw her mother placed in it; the baby at her side.

Then she got her fresh-made garlands, a wreath of beautiful white roses, Arabian, Cape, and star jasmines

tastefully arranged together, and put it on her head ; while the beautiful long hair fell on the shoulders, after she had cut away some heavy tresses as treasures for herself and father.

A cross of white hyacinths and lilies she laid below her waist, and a white moss rosebud in the girdle of her silken shroud, securing firmly the rosary within the fingers of her crossed hands, while a crucifix lay on her breast above them.

She kissed her mother's cold, cold face—again—again—once more—and then she fainted.

They carried Ethna to her room, and there the negroes nursed her. She lay unconscious all the while the funeral departed ; and long after coming to herself again, she remained in a state which caused much anxiety.

The relentless strain upon her nerves, the watching, fasting ; the shake to her frame from the sad fall, and the weakness from the bleeding which alone made rest and nursing necessary—all helped to bring on severe illness ; and, but for the tender care and good nursing of these devoted creatures, might have ended fatally.

The funeral procession took its way, winding down the high hillside.

The bearers were all negro men dressed in white linen, and walking outside them, as bearers, also negro women dressed in white, with white turbans and large bouquets of white flowers in their hands.

A multitude of negroes from the neighbouring estates, and everywhere, had also collected and followed.

Amid the throng, and at the coffin's head, one lonely figure trod, clad all in black—deep contrast to the whiteness everywhere and brightness all around.

All the ladies of the island were collected at the entrance to the town, to meet the coffin, dressed in white, with veils, and carrying flowers. They formed themselves in groups outside the bearers, while their husbands—members of the two legislative bodies—public functionaries, military and naval officers, fell in behind Sir Romuald, between him and the countless black faces following, extending a mile in length.

She was so much beloved throughout the island; all who could leave their home had come, and after the solemn Requiem Mass, went on to the cemetery grave.

'Twas dug on a slope in the bright green sward.

A little apart from others.

The priest laid her in her bed, with a voice that almost groaned; and the flowers were poured in upon her.

Not an eye was dry; the silent reverence they had all observed now burst forth into sobs.

The negroes, so quiet and solemn hitherto, now gave vent to their grief in their wonted style of outcry.

"Eh, mi missis! mi missis! mi missis! Eh la! Eh la! me neber go see you no more. Eh, mi missis! Eh, la! me bin lub um so plenty. He bin so good. Wha

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me go do! wha me go do! Eh la! Eh yah! yah! yah!"

While these returned home in this screaming grief, throwing their arms up in the air and rolling along as if wild with despair; those who had been her friends, who had felt the value of her society, known all the goodness, and experienced at her hands the numberless acts of kindness she was always ministering to all around, were overwhelmed with the silent grief which swelled their hearts.

They bedded the grave carefully up, and scattered it with myrtle.

A marble cross was placed at its head, and a white moss-rose close by it, to be carefully tended by all who loved her, and so kept always in bloom.<sup>1</sup>

An iron railing enclosed the sacred resting-place; and just outside it was planted a native shrub, which, like the willow, always wept. It bent its head all over the grave, and thus the shade she loved was secured to it.

Sir Romuald went well through it all, though supported and propped up at last by friends on either side.

He was a soldier, and as long as duty lasted could command himself; but now that all was over, and the strain had ceased, he sank.

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<sup>1</sup> Within twenty degrees latitude of the equator a succession of roses is kept up all the year round by switching the bushes at every new moon.

He had placed his precious partner in the grave ; she he had waited for so long ; who had been his guiding star, his helpmeet and companion — the one great earthly blessing high above all others ; she who had been what no one else could be—the faithful, loving friend.

All happiness on earth seemed gone from him ; and thinking of his children only added poignancy.

To return to Gomier, then, appeared impossible.

There was one thing alone which he felt would now give him comfort. The only little point of consolation left him now, was to try to add to her joys in Paradise by submitting himself and being received into the Church.

And so eager was he now about it that he would give the priest no rest. He felt doubly severed from her while in the cold outside, and longed to be within its bosom, that the one source of commune with her now, left on earth as he was, might be his.

He had prepared himself for it through the last dreadful night, and immediately on returning from the grave, knelt in the Confessional.

“He must be a Catholic,” he said, before he sought his pillow.

And as she had fully taught him, so that he was quite ready, the priest received him.

“What a mercy this is that she has gained for you, Sir Romuald,” he said, on bidding him good-bye. “You cannot be too grateful to the Almighty for this grace

conferred on you. You cannot, through all your life, do too much to give Him thanks by every means in your power.

"Now, your soul is safe, if you persevere ; but had you died in the state you were last week, you could not have been saved, because you were quite convinced of the Truth, and yet would not embrace it for worldly shame and fear. Any one dying in this state must be lost !

"A soul leaving this world in *invincible ignorance* of the Faith, that is from never having been taught the Truth, but who, having received lay-baptism, has lived up to the light he had, can be saved ; but not that soul who has been taught the Truth in any shade, and yet stands still, refusing to confess it through any want of courage, or caring for what the world might say."

The doctor was most anxious about poor Ethna. He said she was suffering from an overstrain on the nerves, and ordered perfect quiet and a plentiful supply of nourishment, with a tonic to be given regularly ; to all of which Zezelle, Babet, the nurse, and the housemaid Rozette, attended to particularly ; never leaving her a moment, but fanning her constantly, while kneeling beside her bed. They made her everything to be thought of to tempt her to eat, and amid other things the celebrated "Crafraud tea," so light and nourishing as such, but which is more palatable when made into thick soup with tanniers, and peppered.

Ethna lay for several days, in a dreamy state, quietly on her pillow, with closed eyes, and every now and then a tear streaming down her cheek.

She only roused to beg the good negro women to take some rest, but was always answered in this way—

“No, me dear litti missey, me chant leave you.”

All her mother's friends and acquaintances came, anxious to do something; and each found some little duty either to her or the children; though, at the same time, seeing she could not be in better hands than those of the negro women who loved her so much.

They were all actuated by the one law for a Christian to follow—love. They had partly learnt this from Lady de Montfort herself, and felt that at her shrine it should be most fully offered.



## CHAPTER XII.

It was now at this early epoch of her life that Ethna's teaching and resolutions were to be brought into action.

She felt that, young as she was, no one else could be mistress of her father's house, nor could another be to the children what by self-sacrifice and exertion she might become.

With the help of the good nursing she received, and her strong sense of duty rousing her, she gradually became stronger; and as each day brought with it something fresh to be attended to, the calming influence followed.

And one great joy and consolation to her, like a sunbeam through a heavy cloud, was the announcement that her father was now a Catholic. For this she had been taught by her mother to pray daily even from her very earliest infancy; and she could not help feeling that this great mercy had been bestowed now as a reward to the dear parent for whom they were now mourning.

The negro servants were all devoted, and they were anxious to show it; but they all require some one they love to look up to.

The pretty "litti missey, wi di moco mouth," had always been an object of admiration ; and now that she was in such deep sorrow, in her black crape, the pleasing and serving her seemed their chief desire.

The children, who had never been left to their nurse entirely, and were so accustomed to the playful teaching and training of their mother, were now missing her very terribly, and consequently sought in their sister a substitute.

Her father not only took her to church as formerly, but now went with her constantly and attended regularly at every function, which was a great comfort ; but he seemed to continue perfectly impervious to any degree of soothing from her, and the prattle of the little ones, endearing as they were, only as yet roused up the bitter sense of his loss.

The trial this was to Ethna, when she found herself constantly failing in success, may be well imagined.

"There is one aim to set before myself, however," she resolved ; "and nothing below attaining it must satisfy me.

"And there is one rule of life to follow in striving for it, as was shown me by the dear Bishop's words and parting injunctions.

"That is, *never* to despair, however far short I may find myself of what I wish to be ; but to work on and on—never heeding the slips except to repent of them, and to renew my exertions with more earnest zeal after every fall.

The consolation will, perhaps, be only found in the knowledge that I am so far doing his bidding as to be always trying, and if I have no other, I must be content with this.

"I am just commencing my journey. The road, I see, is very rough, and the impediments to proceeding *quickly* very numerous; but buckled with resolve, I will push on—at least I can but try.

"There is one above praying for me, and I know where I can gain strength and help."

When her father was ready for breakfast, she took her place at his side, always carefully avoiding her mother's chair. She talked to him, made his coffee, unfolded and cut the newspaper for him, and watched his face for every little want.

Sometimes he would thank her fondly, and show that he fully appreciated her care; but at others—and far more often—he would scarcely heed her at all, seeming to be quite abstracted within himself.

This to a very sensitive little heart from a father who, before then, had always been so very fond, and proud, and thoughtful of her, was, indeed, hard to bear; but hard as it was, she had to bear it—and bear *with* it, too, and be in the face of it more affectionate, more earnest and attentive still.

"He cannot help it; it is this dreadful blow which has changed him so.

"My duty remains the same."

“Ethna’s chief recreation now was to tend her mother’s pet plants in the beds and flower-pots, which she had taken under her special charge; all the nurslings from England were now looked after with something of reverential affection.

To take her work into the arbour and sit there thinking, was often a resource for resting pastime; but she hardly ever returned without traces of tears on her face.

A ride was never taken now, her father never thought of it; and Gipsy gave much trouble to the groom in consequence. She went to give him bread sometimes, and stroke him; but then he pricked his ears and tossed his head, and seemed to ask her why she had neglected him.

Ethna was always ready at dinner-time to take her father’s hand and try to cheer him, when perhaps sorrow lay on his face so deeply that he had not even a smile for her. The seeing her in black was always trying to him, she had looked so lovely in her white book muslin cannily trimmed with blue.

The black dress paled her, and the happy mirthful glow of her face was gone; when a smile did shine on it, it was always of a melancholy caste. But still the days went on, and still she tried and bore with all most patiently; for she hoped that, by and by, papa would be himself again.

A month passed on, six weeks, two months were gone.

And then one day he called her to him.

"My child," he said, "my darling precious child, I want to tell you what I feel is necessary to be done for you, your brothers, and myself. I can't stay here, it breaks my heart. I've tried to do it, but I really can't. To come home here, and with increasing poignancy still to miss her cordial welcome. To come back to my home, and not find her in it. To fancy I see her figure and hear her voice, and still be disappointed; everything of hers about just as she left it; all speaking to me of the precious gift I have lost, and which can never be equalled, never replaced, is more than I can bear—I *cannot* bear it—I know, my darling, how you have tried to make it easy for me—but—it will not do—there is nothing for it but a total change—we must leave Gomier."

This was Ethna's next hard trial.

There was not a tree, a shrub, a flower-bed, a gate, a stile—but was dear to her.

There were the friends of her childhood—old Noel, Babet, Chloe, the other negroes and the negro huts, the birds, nay, even the very fire-flies were dear; the mountains, the river, the walks among the coffee-fields, and the now more than ever dear arbour, with her own sweet little room, all woven with links of love into her heart.

And these, too, to be severed!

She hid her face in her hands.

"O papa! leave Gomier!—dear, sacred, precious Gomier!—how can we do it?"

Poor child! To her the sweetest consolation was to be still where her mother had been, to tread where she trod, and sit where she sat. Instead of its being a trial to see her mother's things lying about just as she left them, it was a holy comfort. It seemed like sacrilege to touch them. To have these treasures all about and near her was next to having the dear owner of them herself, for they helped her to think over and over again of all they had talked about, and lay up as a store in Memory's garner-house all she had taught, and said, and done.

And now to be torn away from these—to have to leave them!

To her father to live amidst it all was maddening; he could not collect or command himself at all.

Be it as it may, however, Ethna must yield; the child must not only obey, but do so cheerfully, willingly, though in doing it her heart should break.

She felt this as she sat beside him, and he played with the ringlets of her hair, while he added—

“This dear place, about which hangs so many recollections of all that made life sweet and happy, is now the greatest trial to me. Henceforth the only thing which will excite and nerve me is my duty to my country. For it I will live, and in its service die. All happiness is gone from me!—Work—work—this alone is all I want!

Poor Ethna!—On hearing this, her fondest hope was dashed to pieces. To be to the father she so much

loved the one little solace of his life, was what she craved. She would have worked day and night, and waited patiently if it did but come at last.

Instead of that—it was his country—he did not care much for her—*now!* her foolish sensitiveness said within her; she *used* to be his pet! What a change has been brought about by that sad loss.

To one of her character, this was hard. After a long pause, during which something like indignation bubbled in her breast, but which reverence forbade her to express, he added—

“But you must also know that I have come to another conclusion, another resolve, hard to carry out indeed, bitter to execute, but which I feel to be my absolute duty under the circumstances; and that is, my dear little girl, to send you and your brothers all home to England to your aunt.”

Ethna here burst into hysterical sobs, and knelt beside the couch on which her father was reclining.

“O papa! don’t send me away from you!”

He was very much overcome for some minutes; but recovered himself. His task was hard, but he was determined; he had weighed it well, and felt that he was right.

“It will not be just immediately, my precious child. The hurricane months must be well over, and the weather quite settled on the Atlantic before I can trust you on a voyage. I shall send the good nurse Solange with you, to place you in the care of your

aunt, and stay with you till the children are quite happy with her."

Ethna sobbed more and more.

Patting her head caressingly, he went on—

"You know, my darling, you yet have much to learn ; you are only fourteen, not yet fit or old enough by several years to be introduced into society, or head my house, and there is no one now to teach you here, no one to fit you for it. Just at your age you want your mother most. A father's care alone is not enough for a little girl.

"She must have something like a mother!"

A groan came from him here, and Ethna sighed more loudly.

"And then your brothers ; they all want teaching, caring for, and training—such as I have not time for, and could not give them.

"You are not old enough to manage them or understand the way to do it. You know this well, my darling.

"You have been a good, dear little girl. I have watched you when you did not think I did ; and I know how you have tried to teach them, and improve yourself, but that would never be enough.

"You will find this all out by and by. In two or three years' time you will see that I was right, though it is so very hard to think so now.

"Otway will have to go to school ; I should not have sent him quite so soon, but now it is unavoidable.



The other two require much care, with the wisdom and experience of a woman. My little girl would wear herself out, and yet not do much good in this way. Do you understand me—do you see what I mean, my pet?

“But yet, in the way of love, my darling, you can be very useful in England as well as here. Be to your brothers all that love can make you, and you will then be a treasure to them as well as to myself!”

This was some consolation to Ethna ; but her ardent spirit, her pride, her impulsive, sensitive tenderness had wanted to be *all* to father and brothers, and *do* so much—to *be* so much—to *bear* so much.

Perfection must be tried for in another way than that she had laid down for herself. This last unexpected heavy blow changed everything to her.

“You will be your precious mother’s own dear child, my darling, won’t you, and feel that what your father judges to be right, is right—so far as human judgment goes—at least his little girl should think so ; and you will be ready for what he feels is best—cheerfully and happily, I trust.”

Ethna just took her father’s hand and pressed it tightly on her forehead, as she knelt on there beside him.

“I will try, papa—I will indeed ; but oh ! it is very hard to go away from you, and everything I love so much—to go to cold, cold England, and be with strangers,—colder still.”

"Yes, try, my child; you will always try to do what is right, I know." He kissed her fondly on the brow, then rose, and said—"Don't let me see you grieve, it distresses me. You will be very happy in England.

"But while my country requires my services here, I must stay."

Ethna dried her tears to please her father, and kissed his hand. Then when he had left the room, she clasped her hands together with uplifted eyes.

"How can I bear it? it will kill me to leave this place!" But going to her own room she knelt in prayer till she found strength and comfort. The desire to do her duty as it might be laid down for her prevailed.

"We shall have to leave Gomier soon, dear Otway, and go to town for a little while, and then sail away to live in England with our aunt. Won't you wish to take many things away with you?"

"Yes, sister; but I wish we had not to go. I love Gomier, and I don't like to go to England at all."

Each day before departing she spent industriously in gathering from every spot around something to take with her.

The last thing at night and the first thing in the morning she was at her bedroom window intently gazing out.

Was it possible that she was going to leave it?—

never perhaps in all her life to see it once again. Could this scene be painted? Who could put upon the canvas this dusky early morning dawn; the still more lovely twilight? It would baffle surely a artist of the highest skill.

Far back as she could remember, it had been her joy to take the early morning air in this way, and see the stars go out, the trees and shrubs come forth.

It could only be on memory thus portrayed. So she would gaze and learn it, get it printed in so deeply that it should never be forgotten.

One morning, the last before they left, just before she rose, a tap came at her door. A black face peeped in, and then the figure entered. It was Rosette \* who lifted up the muslin mosquito curtain of her bed, and knelt down beside her, sobbing as if her heart were breaking.

"Oh! me dear litti missey, wha fa you go na Englan—me cry ti me no know wha fa do. Me chant sleep—me cry, cry. Massa tink a' we no sabby take care o' you—no you, ni di picnies. Ah! mi sabby fou true—me neber go lef you; me chant lef you, me litti missey!

"Dear Rosette, papa wishes us to go to Englan to live with our aunt, and he must be right. Have patience and I may come back some day."

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\* Rosette was the daughter of an African chief, brought away from her country when she was a little child—baptized, civilised, trained and was now not only a good conscientious servant, but a most pious strictly living Catholic, attending constantly to all her duties as such.

"Ah! mi missey, me want go na England wi you—me chant stop na dis country; me go cry ti you come back."

"Papa says Nurse Solange is to go with us; you stay here with Babet, and take care of everything, and I will never forget you, but will send you some pretty things from England."

"Mi go work na field, me chant stop na di house, 'spose you no dey. Ah! di big missis, an di litti missey a' gone—wha a' we go do—a' we go cry, cry!"

"Well, but be a good Rosette, and don't cry. Have patience; stay with Babet and help her; papa will take care of you. I will always love you, dear Rosette, and never forget you,"—and Ethna put her arms round her neck and kissed her black face with very sincere affection and respect.

"If you love me, don't cry any more; but be a good woman, and do your work. Have patience till I come back. I will send you pretty things from England."

Rosette was thus pacified a little, and went away saying she would try.

In the course of the day Ethna called Babet to her.

"As you are housekeeper, Babet, I want to tell you many things. You will have the charge of everything, so please be very careful, and don't move any of dear mama's things out of the places they are in now. Dust them, but let everything remain just as

it is. And don't bring any of the children up to the house with you, for they may be touching something when you don't see, or gathering the flowers.

"I want you to remember, please, very carefully all I wish about this, will you?"

"Yes, mi missis—yes, me dear litti missey, me neber go do noting t'a wha you no like; me go take care ebery ting, me go watch um, no let nobod touch um."

"Well, dear Babet, I know you will, if you once promise it—so listen—

"Never gather any of the flowers in all these beds close round the house.

"I never have taken one away, since—you know when, dear Babet.

"Let them all bud, and bloom, and die away—and tell Germain of it when he is weeding and raking that he must not.

"He must only nurse and tend the plants; let the flowers alone to tell that she is gone who used to gather them.

"Promise me, dear Babet, that all the while you have charge, however long it may be before I come back again, you will attend to this. Never let any one at all, unless it be papa, pick any of the flowers."

"No, me dear litti missey, me neber go let nobod touch um. Ah! di dear, dear missis! May be he has more pretty flowers wey he dey."

Ethna was right in not losing any time. They were to leave for town to-morrow.

She had got something from every spot; leaves from the trees, pieces of rock from the rivers, grass, moss, and ferns from all her usual resting-places. Such a store to help her memory with!

She was up earlier than ever on this morning, and went to say good-bye to every place; to knock once more at the door of every hut.

She could hardly drink the glass of milk which Noel gave her, because she felt it was the last.

"Good-bye! dear, kind, good old Noel," she said as cheerily as she could.

"Good-bye, me dear litti missey, you no go stay berry long dis time, you go soon, come back, me know dat, me go weary, weary ti you come back."

Ethna rushed away. It was the same with all; they all foretold a speedy return, because they wished it.

Back to her own room. She had slept very little since her father told her of his decision. This dear, dear room, furnished so prettily for her by her mother, when she was weaned away from Annette's too fond nursing in the nursery.

The walls were all hung with sacred pictures, and portraits of her father, mother, and brothers.

"I have plenty of room; I must take all of them—I can't leave anything. It is taking down what dear mama put up, but yet I cannot leave them here.

"I shall never come back—never see it any more. I

must take all I have got in it." And so she packed and packed away with heavy sighs and tears.

When all was done, and ready for the men to take a half-hour yet remained. She entered then her mother's dressing-room. It was still just as it was on that sad fatal Sunday morning.

Here she knelt and wept until the summons came for their departure.

A gentle knocking came to her own room door. She knew it was Babet, and, having risen from her knees she gave one last long look all round the room.

A heartrending groan burst from her.

"But now for fortitude. I ought to have learnt here. Dear mother, I promised you I would try to be all you would wish. You would like to see me bear this well. I must not grieve papa. He feels it right, and so it must be. I must be your own dear child, and follow your example."

And not trusting herself to take another look, she opened the door, went out, turned the key and put it in her pocket.

"Well, Babet?"

"Massa sen up Uncou Henry for tak a' you down in town. He tell me massa say tak care di picnics plenty. Mind di men go softly—no shake di hammock. Massa sen tre hammock—one for you, and two for de picnics and di Nurse Solange. Massa say he want you for ride—di pony go frisky."

The children were waiting in the portico.

"What a party of us!" said little Bernard—"so many men, and baskets, and hammocks."

Otway looked up at his sister. He saw how her heart was breaking,—how she was struggling to control herself,—and he took her hand. "Am I to go in the same hammock with you?"

Uncou Henry came up. "No, me litti massa,—you and you broder tigeder."

Ethna stepped out courageously under the tamarind tree. The branches were hanging down quite close above her head, though the top of the tree was high above the roof of the house.

"I left gathering a branch of you, my favourite, until the last moment; I must have one with blossoms on it." She put up her hand and caught a branch.

Uncou Henry came and cut it off for her. With it in her hand she turned to take one last look at the dear veranda which it shaded. This was too much; she was not strong enough, and she became so faint that Henry had to support her. They ran for water and bathed her forehead. She took a long drink.

"Oh, thank you; I'll try and not do so again. Just put me in the hammock, please."

They did so, and the branch of tamarind tree beside her. She resolutely resisted taking another look, and they all started immediately.

The short time in town before the sailing of the ship to take them to England was a season of trial. Her father was melancholy and hard to please;—now



fondling and making a great deal of his children, at another appearing as if the sight of them distressed him.

She turned for comfort to the priest, her kind director.

"My child," he said to her, "I enter most completely into your feelings. I know how very hard it is for you to bear. I sympathise with you thoroughly in this terribly severe trial come to you so early. But at the same time I must acknowledge that your father is right. I see the good judgment which has actuated him. It is really for your and your brothers' good. It is a necessary thing, a thing that cannot be avoided. He is only doing a father's duty at great cost to himself. It would be doing you injustice to keep you here with him. You have the spirit to make you wish to do great things; but you must remember you are but a little girl. You have great responsibilities, however;—even so, and I showed them all to you in your first sorrow to nerve and rouse you up. These responsibilities can be best attended to by cheerfully following your father's wishes."

"I know; I did not wish to question his decrees, but merely to get your help to make me submit to them and bear them as I ought."

"Yes, my good child, I know it; you shall be helped. Come to Mass every morning while you are still here. Come early enough to see me before Mass, and I will give you Holy Communion every day till you leave."

When all the negroes heard that their little missey, the child of their so much-loved and lamented "Gubner's Lady"—was going away to England, their distress was unbounded. It was most affecting to witness; they would come down from their mountain homes just to have a look at her,—and the presents were innumerable.

Carved calabashes, carib baskets, strings of beads; bright, red, and black berries from the jumby tree; shells in great variety; bags and necklets made from the seeds of one of the mamosa tribe; petrifications of all descriptions, including sea-anemones; eggs of birds blown and strung; pebbles,—everything in short they prized themselves or thought pretty, was brought to Missey Ethna to beg her not to forget them.

On the last day, as they knew that fruit and vegetables, poultry, &c., would be useful on board, each one brought his offering.

Baskets of fruit of every description in abundance; bunches of bananas, fowls, ducks, pigeons, a turtle,—even to a goat and pig,—and on the morning of their embarkation, Ethna was so overwhelmed with bouquets, she hardly knew how to take them away with her.

"You no go forget a' we Missey Ethna, when you dey na England. Me go weary for you, ti you come. Me go so glad when you come back. You no go stop long, me know dat. Me go weary fou see you."

Ethna had become quite calm and courageous in these few days. She was determined not to distress her father by showing in any way the extent of grief that swelled in her young heart. "He shall not have as an addition to his sorrow the thought that it was such a dreadful trial to me to go. I will make him believe that I am quite reconciled and happy about it. His task will be hard enough to bear, I know, even then. To bid us all good-bye, and see us go! and be left alone behind without mama or any of his children!

"I will command myself firmly till he has left us in the ship.

"It would be easier if these dear people would not try me so.

"It makes it harder to leave my native little island home when they are so fond."

Sir Romuald took his children on board. A number of his friends accompanied him; they knew what a hard thing it would be when it came to the last minute, to say good-bye, and leave them, and they wished to try and make it lighter by their presence.

The negroes went in large numbers down to the water's edge to see them off—some crying and screaming in their usual way of showing grief; others, with more self-command, cheering, and saying, "Keep good

heart, me litti missey, keep good heart!"—waving their hats and turbans till the boats reached the side of the ship.

The captains of ships when in the tropics all like to set sail in the evening, because a land breeze comes down over the mountains, which, when the sails catch, enables the vessel to get out nicely.

This evening was particularly lovely. The sun had just set with a brilliant glow, and the tops of the mountains were gilded with its rays. The sea was calm and deeply blue. A soft cool breeze came wafting down among the dates and cocoanut trees which lined the shore, and made them bow their sad adieus.

The signal for the boats to leave was given.

Sir Romuald caught his children in his arms. They clung to him with a sort of desperate struggle not to let him go. Nothing but the imperative necessity for leaving them could have made him do so.

"Ethna, my pride, my precious darling, I give your little brothers to your care. Love them with your best and tenderest love for your father's sake."

A tight embrace, a choking utterance of—"O father! don't go—I can't leave you!" and a husky "My child!"

"Sir Romuald, the boat waits, the current runs very strong; we shall not be able to get on shore if you do not come at once!"

He rushed up, slung down the vessel's side, and dropt into the boat. He screened his face with his hands, leant his elbows on his knees and wept.

"'Tis done; thank God, I've done it. 'Twas my duty, it was right, and now 'tis done! Into Thy safe keeping, O my heavenly Father! I commit them. Protect them, in Thy mercy, through the waters, and bring them safe to land."

Ethna laid herself down on the couch in the ladies' cabin. She had worn round her neck ever since the day of the funeral a ribbon, to which was attached a little bag containing a long tress of her mother's hair and the white moss rosebud she had first put in her hand on that sad night of watching—taking this away to replace it with another when she was put in the coffin.

She took this little bag in her hand and laid her cheek upon it on the pillow,—closed her eyes in prayer, while the tears streamed down, but was calm and still.

The Nurse Solange took the children and put them comfortably to bed, then went to Ethna to see what could be done for her.

She stood gazing at her for a few minutes;—then said—

"He no good for trouble um; he good for let um stan' so." Then went to her cabin and got a large Indian shawl with which she covered her: laid

her own mattress on the floor by the side of the couch, that she in looking up at her might watch for any want, or wish, or necessity for aiding,—and pretended to go to sleep while saying her rosary.

The ship steered out of sight and sailed steadily away.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Four years have now passed since the date of the last chapter.

On the deck of a sailing vessel outward bound to the West Indies, in the twilight of a delightful evening stood a very lovely girl of about eighteen; her hand clutched a rope belonging to the rigging of the ship for the purpose of support, as a brisk, fair breeze was rocking it.

She was lightly clad in white, for they were within the tropics, though still wanting to make up a few degrees of latitude before arriving at their destined haven.

Her hair of deep-brown chestnut, but becoming golden at the points, and shining brightly where the light poured on it, was streaming in luxuriant waves and ringlets as the mirthful zephyrs played with it and tossed it off her brow.

A brilliant colour tinged her cheek, which was the result of health, though added to by the excitement of the passing thoughts within her, which lighted up the classic cutting of her features.

Her large, deep-grey eyes were looking upwards, seeming to be holding commune with the angels, and penetrating far above the atmosphere which hides from human eyes the heavens.

She was above the middle height, both slim and agile in her frame; and telling by every movement, every look, and every word, of a mind refined far above the general order; of a soul that was training itself by soaring flights for heaven, and had been well besprinkled with the dew of grace.

This was Ethna de Montfort four years after she had left her happy island home. She had been presented at the first drawing-room of the season by her aunt; had attracted general notice during the short time she mixed in society while in London, and was now returning to her father.

Seated on the deck beside her, and tuning her guitar, was a somewhat older maiden, with jet-black hair, complexion of a hue contrasting strongly with the radiant whiteness of the other, and eyes which told of a descent from Spain.

Carlotta Glanville, the daughter through her mother of an illustrious house, was amusing her companion with her very beautiful and well-trained voice.

She had been educated in a convent, and the pieces she sang had partly caused the train of thought which swelled in Ethna's heart.

"Sing me one more, Carlotta—another like the last."



"Then will you take your turn, mi Ethie? You are never satisfied when I begin. What shall I sing?"

"'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' if you are not *really* tired."

She had a rich soprano, and out on the broad Atlantic, with nothing to confine it, the swell, rise and fall, and the trilling of the high notes, was grand beautiful, and affecting.

Ethna stood listening, and tears came streaming down her cheeks.

"Now, then," said Carlotta, "I have done my part, handing the guitar to her, 'will you do yours?'"

Ethna had a sweet voice; but it was a low, soft contralto, and she felt it would sound very small and poor after her companion's. She willingly complied, however, and sang, "He shall feed His flock;" and on another request, "O rest in the Lord," making up for the want in power by the pathos and sensitive feeling with which she expressed the words, and the effective harmony of her accompaniment.

The stars had come out during the singing, and after laying down the guitar she again stood in her own childish way gazing up at them, trying, as she was returning to these latitudes, to recognise old friends, and most especially that beautiful constellation of the Southern Cross.

An hour passed on, and then the moon rose, silvering the sea and lighting up the deck.

"My dear young ladies, I cannot let you stay up any

longer ! It is time you were below," said the captain, coming to them. "Shall I call the stewardess to tell your maids to come up for you ?"

"O Captain Faulkner, it is so lovely ; it seems a pity to go down and lose it all !"

"Yes ; but I cannot let you stay. It is too late for you to be up here. After the hot day we have had, the night air will chill you."

The two girls, accompanied by their maids, had been placed especially under the protection of this kind old man. He it was who had undertaken the care of Ethna and her brothers when we last parted from them, and had now once more the charge of her back to her father.

They never thought of resisting the commands of the good, kind old captain, so, though very loathfully, they retired to rest immediately.

On first receiving Ethna and her brothers under her care, their aunt had procured a very superior person as governess, who also took charge of the little boys till they might be sent to school. Ethna did not forget her father's last words, and, whatever she might wish to do, sacrificed everything to them.

Nothing less than a perfect self-abnegation of herself to them and all concerning them, as well as to all the trial connected with it, could satisfy the idea she had of doing her duty.

To aim at doing right was not enough, unless certain and increased degrees of it were being attained.

And yet how often did she slip? Impulse would show itself; sensitiveness and pride would constantly be growing up—

“Even if torn up by the root to-day,  
”Twould peep again to-morrow.”

But by constantly struggling and still persevering she was attaining in a measure what she aimed at and this it was which gave the cheerful sweetness to her whole demeanour which was so winning, while at the same time the consciousness within herself of her constant failings caused the deepest humility.

A grey, very early morning on the Atlantic Ocean about fifteen degrees from the equator. The sea was perfectly calm; the air light and clear, totally without mist or dampness; the stars were retiring, for it was near the break of day.

A sailing vessel had been lying to all night, for she had arrived at its destination late in the evening before. Just about sunset the mountains were discovered peeping above the clouds, but not liking to “round the point” of the island close in sight in consequence of there being no moon to aid them, the captain had preferred to wait for the early morning rather than run the danger of doing so by night.

It was about half-past four. The watch on deck

were very busy coiling and arranging ropes, making every preparation for steering round close in shore as soon as it was light enough to allow of their doing so in safety. The voyage was over.

Ethna had been on deck all the afternoon of the previous day, looking out for the first sight of her native home.

She had stayed up as long as the captain would allow her to do so, taking sketches of the land in the skies, and now again, at this very early hour, she was dressed and up on deck. It is the sweetest hour of the day in these latitudes; no wonder she never liked to lose it.

She took a seat close to the mizenmast on the quarter-deck, for thus she was raised so as to be able to see well over the sides of the vessel.

It was a great amusement to her also to observe the delight of the sailors on coming to land—safe in port, all peril over.

The earnest anxious look of the captain, too, formed a subject for thought. He had been on watch all the two previous nights and the greater part of the day, and was now in the very height of business. He paced the deck with spyglass in hand, and the peak of his cap turned round to the side to help him in using his glass more easily, also for looking up aloft while giving orders to the sailors who were unfurling the canvas.

At last—after a great many “Ahoys!” “Aloft  
P

there!" "Square the main-sheet!" "Mind I head!" "How's her head now?"—the vessel went quietly along close in shore, for the water was deep and just cleverly avoiding the rocks, by the help of the steersman at the helm, she went bowing and curtsying jauntily round first one little peak of land and then the other, stealing past the coves and inlets with a sort of gay "Good-morning" in her gait.

Ethna was again busy with her sketch-book; each little turn brought something fresh; and as the breeze was very gentle, she could easily put each pretty picture on paper.

Here were a number of negro huts, well studied with banana trees, and skirted by a running stream tucked in as it were for shelter under a lofty mountain rising up high above them, but clad to the very summit with most lovely shades of green.

There, close on the shore, lined with waving coconuts, were spread again more negro huts, the tenements of fishermen. The nets had just been brought to land and the negroes were running down with calabashes to purchase "ballahoos" for breakfast.

High up again, on that pretty sloping hill among the mountains, was a rich coffee-plantation, and squares of hedges for the protection of the shrubs well marked out. The negro huts here were sprung upon the broad savanna, surrounded by pomegranates, orange, and bread-fruit trees.

Up in this little nook was seen a party of ex-

travellers, on their way to town with vegetables, resting by the river's side to take their breakfast, having started from their home before it was light.

Another point was passed, and then, up there, on the centre one of those three hills, was seen her own loved home—the happy never-to-be-forgotten home of her early childhood, where she had been as blythe as any of the birds, and seemed to defy all care; but which, alas! was made more sacred to her by the fact of her one great sorrow happening on that spot, the blighting of her early happiness by the taking away of her beloved mother from that cherished home, and which turned it all to grief.

This was carefully traced on a fresh leaf.

"I can sketch *now*," she triumphantly thought, as the last stroke made the picture complete.

It was still early—not yet quite six o'clock—they crept gently on and on into port.

Hark! the matin bell for Mass—how sweetly did it sound at sea, a mile away from shore—quick, clear, shrill, and yet a soft and earnest sound. It was the time for praise and prayer, the offering of thanksgiving.

Ethna closed her sketch-book and waited; she fancied she could see into the church, and knew all who were there.

"My dear, kind, old director! you did not think I should come back again."

They would soon now be in full sight of the town, so

she went down into the cabin to get quite ready for landing.

"Carlotta, are you ready to go on shore? We are just coming in sight of the town. Did you hear the matin bell?"

"Yes, I did; but I have only had time to dress since Merton called me. Have you been on deck? How do you manage it?"

"I am so used to rising early that I woke at four and was up on deck soon after. It was so lovely such a sweet cool morning, the fresh breeze off the land was so delicious, coming laden with the scent of all the mountain flowers. I wish you had been up; I was expecting you every minute. The early morning hour was always my delight, but never before have I enjoyed it like to-day. I have made many sketches in the two hours."

"Have you? Oh, how industrious! I shall be ready directly."

On returning on deck ready to meet her father who, she felt sure, would come off for her, Ethna was particularly struck with the sight on all sides—not quite novel to her, but yet, after a lapse of four years in totally different England, it appeared new.

Numbers of canoes paddled by negroes were coming off to the ship, the men who were rowing being only half-clad, and the women in the boats very gaily and handsomely attired, their turbans quite sparkling in the

sun from the number of imitation jewels which were stuck in them.

The number of these good people who came climbing up the sides of the vessel to welcome the newly-arrived passengers was amusing.

All Ethna's old black friends had been on the alert, and started off as soon as they discerned the ship rounding the point which formed one side of the harbour.

"Eh! mi litti missis, wha dis a eya? Eh! you really come ansome? Ah!" pointing to Ethna's pink cheeks, "da rosy fou true;" then to the coral lips and white skin, "Ah! me neber see something so—Buckra andsome wu. Ah! mi missis, da me you go let wash you fine tings, eh?"

"No, Zanna; da me bin do um before," said another.

"No, da me," said a third.

"Are you going to quarrel about me, my dear people, just because I am so glad to come back to you?"

"No, mi dear missis—da you go gie eberyting fou a we do. You go say, Babet, do dis; me go do um. Zezelle, do dat; he go do um. Ah! a' we so glad you come back! Eh! you really come andsome! You go way litti shild, you come back now one big missis." Taking hold of her dress, and admiring the new fashion—"Ah! da andsome fou true! Me neber see something so, ah!"

In the midst of all this overpowering welcome from



the negroes, Ethna was looking anxiously towards the shore for the sight of her father's boat.

It appeared at last making off to them. She could not distinctly recognise him yet; there were other gentlemen with him. The ship had not yet come to anchor, and was only slowly making its way for it as it was very calm. The sun, rising at the back of the island, was only noticed as lighting up the clouds above the tops of the mountains.

"Ah! look, di massa da come!" the negroes cried out; and all made way as the Governor's boat neared the ship.

Ethna could see him now distinctly. Four years had made an alteration in him, as well as in herself. He looked ten—no, twenty—years older; what would he think of her? Mr. Glanville was in the same boat with him; he did not look changed. No; he had not suffered any sorrow.

Sir Romuald seemed very much overcome at first. He held Ethna away at arm's length, after the warmth of the first embrace, to take a good look at her. "Oh how like what *she* was just at the same age;" and a heavy sigh came from him.

Her mother was not forgotten then!

As it is difficult to go on board or leave a vessel while it moves, they waited quietly until it anchored. Having had their cup of coffee, there was plenty of time for getting on shore to breakfast.

"Captain, will you not come with us? How can

I thank you enough for the care you have taken of your charge?"

"Right welcome, honoured sir; your daughter seems like one of my own. This is the second time I have had the care of her, and a great pleasure it has been to me. I cannot come to breakfast; now that we have anchored, I must get some rest."

The usual plan for taking ladies on board, or for their leaving a sailing ship, used to be, at least, placing them in an arm-chair, rolling flags round them, and tying the chair very firmly to a rope, which went through a pulley on one of the mainyards, and so slinging them, as it were, over the side of the vessel down into the boat.

Sir Romuald went down the side on the scaling-ladder, and standing in the boat received his child as she was let over and down. Carlotta followed to her father in the same way.

There was a little surf on at the landing-place, and it required some adroitness to get on the beach without a wetting. The negro men who were rowing the boat, seeing this, with the greatest expertness ran the boat on shore, threw up their oars, and leaping out into the water, caught up the two girls in their arms, and carried them safely up to a dry footing.

A number of negroes were collected to welcome the landing, and those who had been on board followed the boat. Sir Romuald felt proud and pleased.

It was not long before they arrived at the gate Government House grounds.

They mounted the flight of steps and stood inside portico, then passed through the jalousied gallery which surrounded the inner rooms, and on into the general reception room.

A lady came forward to meet them. She was short and thin, very sallow in complexion, and her hair something the same hue. She wore spectacles, for being extremely shortsighted; and the colour of her dress was blue, without an attempt at being judicious, however, which was in her favour, but it was not becoming.

This was a poor relation of Sir Romuald's, and who was dependent on him for support, but Ethna had never before seen her.

Sir Romuald sent for her to keep house for him while he was left alone.

She came forward very awkwardly, peering through her glasses.

Ethna held out her hand cordially, and was very amiably led to the sofa.

"You have had a very long voyage, I think—have you not? We have been expecting you every day this week."

"Yes; it has been so calm, but most delightful—the sea was like a lake all the way, the breeze so gentle and the evenings so sweet and cool—I enjoyed immensely. We did not go many knots a day, but

still what we did make was sure, for the wind was always in our favour—'tis just the time of year for it."

"Is it? I did not know. I am no sailor; I hate the sea and all that belongs to it."

"Do you? oh, I love it! I think it always beautiful, even in a storm. I enjoy a storm when there is no danger."

"You do! then I conclude you are never ill?"

"Yes, I am very when I first go on board; but I cannot help admiring the sea, all in it, and about it. Nothing can be more delightful than a calm starlight or moonlight evening in the midst of the Atlantic. It is so wonderfully grand to feel one's self in the tiny speck of a vessel, and the many thousands of miles of water forming the basin one is in—nothing but a plank between one's self and death, and the Almighty protecting us from it—nothing between yourself and the horizon all round, and the magnificent spread of heaven above one. I do enjoy it so much; and when there is music on board, such as we have had, you cannot think how charming it is. Carlotta Glanville has the richest soprano voice I ever heard; it has been well trained; and she is so good-natured in singing."

"Is she? I hope we shall see much of her. Breakfast will soon be ready. Your papa ordered your own old room for you, so I daresay you know the way."

Ethna did, indeed; it was not such a dear room as the one at Gomier, but still hers, and she was glad to get into it once more. So many recollections, however,

crowded upon her, with the strong sense of the duties to be discharged, that she spent the time before the breakfast bell rang in prayer.

"Oh! my mother, how thankful I am to have your portrait," and she took it from her breast,—it in a large locket with a double case. On one side the miniature, on the other the rosebud and the lock of hair.

Thus fortified, she went to breakfast. The "mocha rolls" (green bananas toasted and buttered) and a slice of the "Avocada pear" (subaltern's buttermilk) was a novelty most delicious after so long, especially as this was a favourite breakfast of hers.

She would have behaved remarkably well; but Uncou Henry had taken his station exactly opposite to her while waiting, for the purpose of gazing with admiration at his young mistress, come back to the world as he thought, so wonderfully beautiful from the radiant pink cheeks she had brought.

The faithful old servant was very much moved seeing her back in her seat at table, and he was struck with the likeness to her mother, as he had seen her on her first arrival among them.

Ethna looked up inadvertently, and saw tears in the kind man's face as he looked at her. He put his hand to his eyes and brushed them away when he saw she had noticed him; but it very nearly upset her completely and she had to contend with a choking feeling for a long time.

Entertainments of various kinds followed the arrival of the Governor's daughter; but there was one reception at Government House of a particular nature, and this deserves notice.

Some few months previously, one of Her Majesty's ships of war, cruising about in the neighbourhood of the West Indies, had taken, according to orders, a slave ship well laden with a goodly number of healthy fine men and women with children from Africa. The slaves had always to be brought to the nearest English colony, and there set free, though at the same time given in charge of the Governor; and this slave ship was taken to Dominica.

Sir Romuald, always on the alert on these occasions, had taken them in hand with the greatest benevolence, and treated them with most considerate and friendly kindness.

They were, in the first place, supplied with proper clothing, which always pleases them extremely; and then distributed among the black inhabitants of the several estates, whose owners or managers were willing to have them as guests and servants.

The chief of their tribe (who happened to have been captured with them), a very tall, large, majestic-looking man, who had been chosen chief on that account, and whose name was Coomooloo, he sent, with several others attached in a particular way to their chief, to his own estate, with orders to his manager to be extremely amiable and attentive to

them, not compelling them to work, but only degrees enticing them to do so. To take every one to civilise, train, and teach them, especially the English language; but above all, to obtain their affection and goodwill by the utmost kindness.

They had not given the least trouble, not even the generally exacting stipendiary magistrates; were following the habits and customs of their own nation, who had, a great many years been brought away from Africa, as they themselves had been; thinking these habits and customs infinitely superior to their own, and eagerly trying to improve themselves.

In this way, they were also becoming ready for priests to take them under their care to teach baptism.

They were all of them exceedingly impressed by the kindness and magnanimous treatment of the Governor, never met him anywhere without bowing down to the ground, and expressing by some sign, other, the hand on the breast, or by word, how they felt it.

Now Coomooloo, the chief, being stationed on Romuald's own estate, could not fail to notice the excitement and affection produced among all inhabitants by Ethna's return; and resolved within himself that it would be a good opportunity to test their gratitude.

In their own clever way, he managed to

municate with all of his tribe who were stationed on other estates ; and it was determined among them that they should all assemble on the first general holiday, and go in a body with all the state they could manage, to Government House, to pay a visit to this newly-arrived daughter, and express to the Governor how very highly they appreciated the way in which he had treated them ; and how willing they were to submit to his decrees, and pay him every allegiance.

This plan having been told as a secret to one or two of Sir Romuald's old attached black servants, it was mentioned to him as a secret, that he might be prepared for it.

Accordingly, Sir Romuald did prepare, and told Ethna of his intention to receive them in the drawing-room, and formally introduce her to them, recognising in Coomooloo during the visit only the chief of his tribe, and trying in every way to entertain them.

Ethna joyfully acceded.

About two o'clock of the day named, just after luncheon—a distant tum-tum was heard—and they knew at once by this that the visitors were coming.

Ethna was sitting at her work-table busily employed at some embroidery. Sir Romuald in his arm-chair. The sound of the “tum-tum,” increased louder and louder, and with more energy as they approached. The sound of footsteps, and as of jumps and tumblings, together with the ever-exciting “shock, shock,” made it impossible to resist going to the window.



Coomooloo was seen walking in a most manner, with demure face, under a very large umbrella—the very largest they had been able to procure—held over him by two of his attendants, also with demure faces, as if they were engaged in a religious ceremony. Six more men in attendance, also, were running a few paces forward, and then back to each time they returned to him, bowing down to the ground as low as they could, and at the end of ten paces forward, before they returned, making a bow with head over heels, or, perhaps more properly, heaving head, by placing their hands on the ground, vaulting right over, lighting on their feet, ready to return to make their bow.

On arriving at the gate of the grounds round Government House they reverted the order of this, and making their bows towards the house, instead of the chief, lower and lower as they came nearer, and then portico steps to the door.

Sir Romuald, now surrounded by his aides-de-camp who had collected at the sound of the tum-tum, ran forward to the door to receive Coomooloo, who advanced with the greatest gravity under his umbrella, not descending to bow himself, but evidently feeling that his attendants had done all this for him.

Sir Romuald held out his hand, and Coomooloo, long understood that this action meant friendship, brotherly love, and kindness, took the hand, and held it in his, quite tight, all the time

spoke a rather long speech, expressing how grateful they all were for the way they had been treated since the big ship brought them to this country. It is hardly possible to put his sentences down on paper; as they were chiefly understood by signs,—the few English words he had picked up being mixed with a few patois French, and a great many of his own.

There was only one thing he complained of, and that was,—a buckra having invited him once to take some drink from a bottle, which had made him very ill indeed, so that he feared for a long while he was going to die. He expatiated very violently on all the horrors of the poison the bottle had contained, and explained rather ludicrously the effect it had on him.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Romuald, in reply, said he advised him never to touch it again, for it was very bad for the health indeed; and ended with the words—"He no good, he no good," to make himself clearly understood!

Coomooloo responded "He no good, he no good."

Sir Romuald then led him into the room up to his daughter.

Ethna did not acknowledge this introduction in the same style she would have done to any other prince in the world (she was too well acquainted with the negro character from babyhood for this), but, with her work

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<sup>1</sup>This was new rum. He had been invited by a Scotch overseer to take a glass of rum and water, mixed in the strength the overseer always drank it; and Coomooloo, wholly, unaccustomed to such a beverage, or any spirit at all, was made quite intoxicated.

in her hands, she said very sweetly and with a smile on her face, "How d'ye do, Coomooloo very glad to see you."

Coomooloo did not exactly understand the but the saying his name, and with that radiant was quite overpowering. He bowed himself down to the ground, and said something to his companions, which expressed that he had never seen anything before so lovely.

Ethna there and then made a great conquest of this savage heart, and from that time a word or of hers was quite enough to make him do anything in the shape of duty or for his own good. She helped much towards making him a Christian.

They were all very much amused with the things in the drawing-room, but most particularly mirrors—which excited them as much as they and dogs, who see themselves therein.

One of the men was particularly attracted by Ethna's work, and begged her to make him a pair of trousers like the green silk bag of her work-table.

On Ethna saying she was not clever enough for that, they all expressed by sign and look as well as words that they did not believe it.

They went away, highly pleased with their visit in the same style that they came, exactly to a certain distance and then dispersed themselves to their several homes.

A very melancholy occurrence took place a few

after this, and which caused Ethna much distress. This was the untimely death of one of the venerable priests who had so often blessed her as a baby in Annette's arms.

The good old man had been advised by his doctor to take rides for his health, and accordingly every afternoon he mounted a creole pony for this purpose. He was so much beloved by his people that he was never allowed to go alone. The blacks can all of them run and walk as fast as a horse, and can go the same distances without fatigue. The good priest's serving-boys all took their turns in accompanying him in this way, feeling it not only a privilege but an honour.

On this afternoon when taking his usual ride, he went first to an estate on level ground, and then telling the boy he must wait till his return, for the road to the next estate was too steep for him to try, and he would not allow him to do so, he went on.

The boy waited till it was unusually late, when he sought his master without success.

He then went back to the town to name this, and the alarm and distress created among the Catholics was so great that they all immediately went in search of him.

After searching all night in vain it was discovered, late in the morning, that both horse and rider had fallen down a precipice of 300 feet perpendicular height.

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Nothing but the most diligent efforts of the whole town, and of all the people also living on every estate in the neighbourhood, could get the body, which by the evening, however, was accomplished.

It was supposed that he took a path from the road, which was a very dangerous one, by mistake, and on coming to an impassable part, in endeavouring to turn his horse, both went down the precipice.

The good, dear, venerable priest had gone out when young, and spent his whole life working among these black Africans, and his afternoon rides were generally on some visit to them.

He was so beloved that nothing would prevent their having his body, and the difficulty of getting it up three hundred feet of a perpendicular precipice may be imagined. But this was done by the warm devoted hearts of these good creatures, without the help of English machinery or any other invention. They risked their own lives to get it—slinging themselves down by ropes, and holding on from bush to bush—and with this risk and the very greatest difficulty they at last succeeded.

Nothing could exceed the veneration and love with which the interment took place. Every Catholic in the island, who could possibly do so, attended his funeral with flowers and every mark of their distress and respect.

The feeling with which every Catholic negro regards

his priest, will show what influence kindness, interest, and an effort to improve them has.

They live only on the offerings of the people, and whatever a negro may have, he always gives the best part to the priest, without ostentation, or any desire to obtain favour. He simply takes it, and lays it down at the door of his house or room.

Of his vegetables, from every kind, he picks out the best to offer. From his fruit-trees the same. Of his fowls, ducks or turkeys, crapauds, or anything else, the finest and fattest will go to the priest. Or if he kill a pig or goat the best joint will be on the priest's table.

Fishermen select from the nets they have brought to shore the best and largest fish to take to the presbytery.

Their churches are not endowed in any way, the priests having gone out as missionaries, and often very poor. But they are kept in the very best order by the offerings of the people; and, indeed, the very churches themselves built by them.

They are invited to the work by the priests, and then, as voluntary offerings, the negro will spend his earnings, or any other leisure time, in collecting stones from the beach or river, cutting down trees for timber, and carrying this on their heads, in panniers, or on the back of a creole pony, to the place for building.

The carpenters and masons all build without any payment in their leisure time.

It is to build a house for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament—an offering to the Almighty, and they feel they cannot do too much.

Their payment will be in eternity.

This is the negro's *heart*—and it is fact.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ETHNA had not been back in her native island home more than four months, when the mail from England brought the news to her father that he was promoted on to Canada ; and that the new governor who was appointed to take his place — Lord Fitz-Aucher — would be sent out immediately, that he might be a few months in the island before Sir Romuald would be required to leave for his new post.

“Lord Fitz-Aucher, papa ! Why, I know him a little. I met him at the Countess of G——’s ball a few weeks before I left England, and he was my partner in a quadrille. I should think he is about forty or forty-five. He is a fine, handsome, noble-looking man, extremely affable, pleasant, and good-natured. He will suit the people here, I fancy.”

Little had Ethna imagined the consequence of her having met Lord Fitz-Aucher at this ball and danced with him ; but the result will be seen.

“He will have to be our guest, however, at any rate, my darling,” said Sir Romuald.

“Miss Anderson, will you be kind enough to make every preparation necessary for the reception of his



lordship when he arrives, which, I fancy, will be by the next steamer. By what I hear from home, it will not be needed to make arrangements to leave this before two or three months hence; as I have to initiate him a little, and he wishes to test the climate for himself.

"I am glad of this; it will take a little time to reconcile me to making the change; it will be hard for me to leave this, and all the people I am so attached to."

"And so it will for me, papa! I did hope we were settled here for a long time. No other place will ever seem like home to me, except in the fact of being with you; but I can try to make a home anywhere with you."

Her father did not answer. He was pondering.

Every preparation was accordingly made for the arrival of the new guest.

And Ethna was schooling herself to take another farewell of her beloved island home.

Meanwhile, however, the presence of Miss Anderson in her father's house, as mistress of all its arrangements and housekeeping, had been, and still continued to be, a great annoyance to Ethna, who, in her desire to be a comfort to her father, wished to have the whole superintendence of everything, and to be mistress supreme.

Miss Anderson was an exceedingly worthy woman, and a very good housekeeper, thrifty, well managing, and economical.

But being over fifty, and always having lived in England in a quiet country place, not seeing much society, she was very quaint in her ideas of things, very stiff and sedate.

The house, therefore, was very different to what it would have been under her mother's management; and Ethna felt this keenly; more keenly, perhaps, from her father considering his cousin not only to be clever and worthy, but certainly more likely to be able to form a just judgment of things than a girl of eighteen.

She was a matron, and he felt that not having a mother Ethna required a matronly, kind friend to look to her comforts, and manage certainly better than she could.

Ethna winced under this very much, and she sought her director for advice and consolation.

"Yes, indeed, I can quite see what it costs you to bring your spirit down to calm submission to the judgment of one who you think is put in your stead, for all those holy duties it was your laudable desire to fulfil. It is, indeed, a cross for you to bear."

"I can hardly bear it. Papa likes me to amuse him, to ride with him, to sing to him, to talk to him; but he will not let me do all those things which minister to his comfort. Papa does not seem to love me as he did."

"Don't say so, my child! Your father's love for you can never change. Nothing could interfere with that. He must still feel for you all that a proud, fond father feels."

"Yes, in that way. But I cease to be the comfort of his life. I wanted to be all to him take charge of his house, to be his companion solace, as well as amuse him."

"Yes, I quite understand. But, don't you see, th your old fault again. You want to be the *first*, the engrosser of the affections of those you love. Loo it in this light. You are blinded to the right as of it. You have a very laudable, dutiful, stron devoted attachment to your father, and your spir self-sacrifice would give yourself up, with every and comfort of your own, to the serving him, and d your duty as a loving daughter ; but you do not the *selfishness* of wishing to be all to him, nor the v of humility in it either.

"You aim at attaining to that degree of perfectio this life which will fit you for the next. You feel it is in this life alone it must be striven for. But forget that humility is the foundation to build 'You aspire,' says St. Austin, 'to great things, b with little ones. You desire to erect a very l building, think first of the foundation of humi The foundations are always sunk proportionably to intended weight of the building ; and the higher intends it, the deeper must the foundation be laid.'

"The height must answer to the depth, so that can only raise the edifice of evangelical perfect which you intend to build, proportionably to the d of humility you give to the foundations.

"Now your desire of being all to your father, though it appear at first sight to be strongly praiseworthy, is, in reality, the reverse of being humble. It is, in fact, entirely incited by pride. It is your *duty*, simply your plain duty, to be all to your father that he requires of you. But true humility would make you feel that all you *could* do, doing *all* your duty, is nothing worth, and therefore ought not to desire return.

"That others should share this with you. That there should be others to serve and please him as well as yourself, should be a source of comfort and happiness to you. At least humility would feel this. Humility would think that any one, and every one, would serve him better than you could yourself, and therefore be glad that they should do so. At the same time, however, never for one moment relaxing in making every effort to please him, simply because it was your duty, and love made it easy. Pride wants to do all *itself*, and be everything *itself*."

Ethna did really feel truly humbled by its being put to her in this way. She had never viewed it in this light before.

"I see!" she said, with tears, "I see! But yet I cannot bear to see another even partly taking my mother's place!"

"Are you then presuming to question your father's actions? Pride again! What right have you to dictate as to the wisdom, or find fault with what he

does ? He has partly made this arrangement with regard to your comfort and happiness."

Ethna flinched at this.

"But another reason for your being contentedly submissive about it, presents itself. You may marry, and then your father would be badly off indeed without good matronly housekeeper, managing his house well and capable of being in some degree a kind of companion to himself. Your brothers, too, as they grow up will require such a person in their father's house."

"Oh ! but if papa had only been satisfied with me I would gladly sacrifice everything for his sake. I would do this solely from pure love to my mother. I do not wish to marry."

"So you think now, you have not yet been put to the test. Life is made up of contradictions ; and it is for the very purpose of bringing us (if we make right use of them) to that state of perfection before we die which is what you aspire to, that these contradictions are sent.

"The thwarting of all you wish, the being placed in this peculiar position, is an especial boon sent from Heaven to help you in arriving at it.

"If you had your wish, your pride would grow. You would become so self-satisfied with being (as pride would instigate) all you ought to be, from the sacrifices you were making in the path of duty, that instead of advancing, step by step, in gaining perfection

tion, you would have been daily going down from it.

"But over and above all this, my child, is the necessity—the absolute bounden duty—for submitting without question, without a murmur, but obediently, reverently, cheerfully, and lovingly, to the will of your Heavenly Father in the matter.

"He has decreed this. He who grasps infinite space, and yet numbers the hairs of your head—stoops—troubles Himself, so to speak, as to order and rule all the little events of your life, so as to help towards your attaining that which He sees in the very depths of your heart it is your pure wish to gain.

"Thankfully then—humbly, meekly, reverently, and with adoration—accept this trial, and in the deepest love work with it. You will, of course, have very many petty daily crosses to take up, and perhaps even some poignant ones; but if you think constantly of the love which allows them; or it may be purposely sends them for the very object of enabling you, by perseverance, to attain what you aim at, you will be able to bear them well, and use them in the very way for which they are sent; for remember—'My grace is sufficient for you,'—and with that grace and strength given you through the means He has ordained, you will be able to work and conquer.

"Submit yourself humbly and cheerfully. Try all you can to please your father, but instead of wishing

to be all to him, feel rather glad that there is some one beside yourself to minister to his comfort and happiness. I will pray daily for you, and be assured the blessing of the Almighty will be with you."

Ethna was humbled and thankful. She was too earnest in her desire to do right and really be what she aimed at, not to see clearly at once that the kind priest was right, and that the faults he had opened up to her view were true. "It is the old, old story," she said to herself. "Selfishness! pride! over-sensitiveness impulsiveness! indignation at feeling myself wronged When will they be got rid of?—I must try again!"

The next mail did bring Lord Fitz-Aucher.

As he had been prepared for, and was expected to be Sir Romuald's guest, he very gladly accepted the invitation, and instead of making arrangements for himself until the time expired for Sir Romuald de Monfort to remain, he took possession of a few rooms set apart for him.

Several entertainments were given to introduce him to the people he was come out to govern; numerous excursions into the country, among the hills, boating to those places impossible to get to by any other means; and in all these Ethna joined with pleasure and pain, taking her sketch-book with the feeling she was going away again, and as being with her father most likely now never to return. It was therefore her wish to take away with her as many paintings as she could manage within the time, and particularly a

oil painting of the sketch she had taken from the vessel's deck, on her return, of her much-loved mountain home.

She was busily at work one afternoon at her easel in the drawing-room, ready to receive visitors if they came, when Lord Fitz-Aucher, who had declined at luncheon any going out, entered. He took a seat at her side, and began to talk about the painting.

Ethna was surprised to find he knew much about the art himself; he entered into the progress of the picture warmly, and admired very much the taste with which she was painting it."

"You are very much attached to this island, are you not?"

"Yes indeed, for many, many reasons. It is my native home; the scene of all my happy childhood's hours; the place wherein is linked all that memory holds dear; the recollection of my precious mother's life, her love, her teaching, all her gentle goodness. And besides this, her sacred resting-place is here. It almost broke my heart when before I had to leave it. I fear I shall hardly bear it better now."

Lord Fitz-Aucher made a little movement as if this speech was gratifying to him; quite unnoticed, however, by Ethna, who was intently going on in the use of her paint-brush.

He saw a tear drop on her cheek, and fall.

With another movement he said: "Would you not like to remain here? or if you went away with your father, would you not like to go feeling sure of returning?"



"I could not possibly stay here without my father. Duty will take me with him wherever he may go. I know that he will always cling to this island as his dearest home, the scene of all his happiness.

"Nothing but duty to his country would take him away from it; and therefore I feel sure that whenever he can manage it he will return, and then I can come with him.

"But if you had an opportunity for remaining or returning offered you, which you might like to accept, how would you act?"

"I cannot think of any opportunity which would be at all likely I could accept away from my father. He has a claim on me, and my wish is to do all my duty to him, not only because I ought, but because I love him most devotedly."

A sigh came at this answer, but Ethna was just holding up her picture at arm's length to see the effect of the last touch she had made, and did not even hear it.

"A bold venture must be made," he thought. "She does not seem to understand me at all."

"If I were to ask you to remain here as my wife, could you be so merciful as to accept the offer?"

Ethna started in the greatest surprise. Such an idea had never entered her head.

She looked up with a sort of inquiring expression in her face, as if asking whether he could possibly be in earnest by making such a strange request; but seeing that he did look very much in earnest, she felt very deeply pained, and tears filled her eyes.

"Oh, my lord! I am a great deal too young for you! I could not think of such a thing. I am only a foolish little child. I could never make you a good wife; besides I have a great many faults which you don't know anything at all about, and which will prevent my being a good wife to any one. At any rate, I feel quite sure I should only be a great trouble to you. You are so much older, I should never do for you."

Ethna did not for a moment think of the pain or mortification she was inflicting by this speech; but only of the necessity for making a truthful, plain, honest answer; and, too, an answer which she felt would be decided, and, as such, received. But to her dismay he said—

"I shall not take this as an answer. You were startled—unprepared—you want time to think. I will not trouble you for a while. You shall see that I am ready to sacrifice everything to please you. You shall have time to learn how thoroughly and devotedly I am attached to you; how sincerely and deeply I admire you; how I am ready to spend my whole life in making you happy. And you shall also see that I cannot live without you. Promise me to think of my proposal, and give me an answer at a future time."

"I cannot promise, my lord—indeed, I cannot."

To Ethna's great relief in one way, but extreme confusion in another, more visitors were announced.

She managed to receive them collectedly, and certainly most cordially.

After remaining a few minutes for a little talk, Lord Fitz-Aucher withdrew.

Lord Fitz-Aucher waited patiently a while feeling he had given her sufficient time to think that she seemed shy and trying to avoid him, rer his entreaty by letter.

Ethna then saw the right thing to do was to co her father, as he would tell her the proper way in declining, so that it might be final.

She therefore went to him when he was quite the next day, and gave the letter to him to read, to him at the same time what she had said in answer. Lord Fitz-Aucher spoke to her, begging him to tel what she had best do now.

To her great astonishment he returned the very calmly after reading it, and said—

“I knew about this, my darling, from the Lord Fitz-Aucher asked my leave to address you I freely gave it him.”

“But, papa?”

“But, my darling! though I shall lose you, I re in this prospect of happiness for you.”

“But, papa, I can never be his wife; I am a deal too young. Did you not understand that I him so?”

“Yes. But you see he would not accept that an He is very deeply attached to you; and I have assurance that he will make you an excellent hus

He was a young man when I knew him twenty years ago, but I admired and valued him then."

"But, papa—I have not any very particular regard for him. I should not mind it at all if he went away."

"Because you don't know enough of him, my darling! If you did, I am sure you would feel as I do."

"Very likely; but that is not enough for a wife."

"What do you know about it? Any romantic notions you may have formed are not such as will ensure your happiness. I feel very anxious about your future, my dearest child; and I am certain that by giving you to Lord Fitz-Aucher, I shall secure for you everything that a woman can desire."

Ethna sat the picture of despair, looking down at her hands as they lay in a languid position on her knees.

"Why should I marry at all, papa? May I not always live with you?"

"I could never agree to such a sacrifice, my good little girl. I am not only growing old, but you know all my happiness in life is crushed. To keep you with me as my amusement and solace would be selfish indeed. I only live for my duty, and when that is done I am ready to go."

Seeing a tear fall from her eye, he said—

"Don't misunderstand me. I have the very greatest happiness in your society and love; but I should be departing very far indeed from my duty as a parent, to

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keep you with me on that account, when you have such an auspicious offer of marriage made you."

Ethna did not think it in any way auspicious. If happiness was thought of, why was she not consulte she *felt* : but said—

"I should be so much more happy in remaining with you, my dear papa !"

"You don't understand or know anything at all about it, my child ! I am a much better judge of all these things for you, than you can be for yourself."

"But, papa ! my one particular reason is, what you seem to overlook altogether, that Lord Fitz-Aucher is a Protestant."

"That is no reason at all with *me*. Did not your mother marry a Protestant ? Can you not imitate her and do for your husband all that she did for her wretched, unworthy self ?"

What could Ethna say more. She remembered that this was the one grief of her saintly mother's life—but she could not tell it.

"I am not capable of doing what my mother did for her papa. Try as I may I should never be like her. With me, this blank in religion would entirely prevent reciprocating his affection."

"Nonsense, my child ! Go and reflect ! Bring common sense to bear upon it ! That lovely, bright thing, reciprocated love ! never lasts in this world. As soon as it lives and thrives, 'tis dashed to pieces ! It could not stay ; 'tis too much bliss :

earth. We never should gain Heaven if we had it always here."

Ethna trembled. She feared she had hurt her father's feelings, he seemed so moved.

She rose and took his hand, holding it in hers as she looked into his face.

He patted her head, and kissed her.

"Go and think, my darling! You will tell me the result another time. I know that I can trust you."

Ethna did go; buried her head in her hands, and wept. Why did he feel in this way? Ah! it was that sudden death-stroke that had taught him this. If she had still been here, how different it would have been.

But—by WHOSE WILL was it she was gone?—The answer showed her that submission was her duty. She had been taught never *even to displease*, much less disobey her parents, unless the law of God *did plainly* interfere.

She knew of no law of God which would interfere with doing as her father wished in this case. She feared the not doing it would be obstinate self-will. Such a life might possibly be sent her for the very purpose of rubbing down all her faults; all that checked her rapid progress to perfection, and the gates of Heaven.

No cross, no crown! She must accept the cross or run the risk. She prayed and thought again. "Most likely it is the very sort of life I need. I who have

such a depth of love within me, should anything of an earthly shrine absorb it, it would militate very much against my reaching Paradise. I might be jealous selfish, wrapt up in earth; and all the love which should be offered to my God, would be stuck here.

"'Tis well—I see—I understand. I will speak to my director first, and if he thinks I should, with God's help, I will do it."

This being done, the next morning she went to her father again.

"Is it really your wish, dear papa—your real, fixed well-judged desire that I should accept Lord Fitz Aucher's offer of marriage? Do you really expect me to wish me, to obey you in the matter?"

"I do really wish it, my dearest child. I should not think of *enforcing* it, but I am so firmly convinced it is the very best marriage for you that could be that I should be very much disappointed at your persisting in refusing. He is the best fellow living and I know will be a devoted, kind husband. I must acknowledge that though the pain of giving you away and losing your society will be very great, yet that I shall be proud to see you his wife, and happy in feeling that I had secured for you, at my death, such a protector, and such a home."

"Very well, then, dear papa, will you tell him I consent, and will try and do my best in the way of doing my duty?"

"That is like a sensible girl. I know you will revere him as a wife should."

So her fate was sealed. We have seen what actuated her, and we must trust that the right motive on which she sacrificed herself will bring its reward, either in this world or the next—perhaps both.

Lord Fitz-Aucher was most urgent that there should be no delay. There was yet a month before her father must leave for Canada, and it was settled the wedding should take place just before his departure.

Ethna was faint at heart; the only thing that gave her consolation was the remaining in her native home, among all her childhood's friends.

But curiously enough, she was to take her mother's place;—and then came before her the responsibility of acting as she had done.

She would try.

She had been thoroughly sincere; she was not deceiving. If she only did her duty as far as she could see it, poor girl! her husband could expect no more.

The morning came. She allowed herself to be dressed. A magnificent attire, as befitting the bride of a duke's son, had been prepared. It was entirely composed of Brussels lace of a beautiful design, arranged over white satin; the train and trimmings studded with pearls, and an exquisite set of pearls adorning her neck and arms. A large and equally handsome Brussels lace veil, reaching to her knees, was confined



on the head by a crown of natural white roses and orange blossoms. The lovely rings and wavelets of chestnut hair, worn as her father always would have, loose over her shoulders and back, showing to great advantage through the lace.

She was ready, trembling, pale, and agitated. She awaited her father's call. He came. He too was pale and evidently suffering from much excitement. Tears stood in his eyes as he looked at her.

"My precious, little lovely darling, it is a very good and yet a happy day for me. It is a very poignant grief to lose you, but I know I am giving you to one who is as worthy of you as any I could find, providing you with protection and a home the best that England can produce."

The carriage waits.

The wedding-breakfast was altogether a thing quite new by itself, and unlike what our readers are accustomed to. Every person in the island having the privilege of notice at Government House was invited. They were all taken such an interest in the bride from her betrothal, that to leave any one out would have been unkind. Uncou Henry, at the head of all the waiters, attended with the different wines, and made saugaree. He was as proud as pride could be. "The litti missey was now the wife of such a fine, big, 'a some buckra!—one chief na fou he country; an a' gubner too; an he no go, go 'way 'ta'. Ah! da g

fou true." He seemed to think it was impossible to be too merry, and tried to make every one else so.

The negroes had gathered from every part of the island with baskets of flowers, and flocked round the church. They literally strewed the roads through which the bride and bridegroom returned, and then they took advantage of their privilege of being uninvited guests at the wedding-party, and thronged around Government House, not wanting anything at all in any shape, but just the pleasure of looking on, and admiring their much-loved young "missey."

"They knew very well she would marry some grand buckra; and he had followed her all the way from England, and was to be their gubner, too! Ah! da good fou true. He go stop wi a' we now. He no go, go 'way.

When Ethna was taken away in the afternoon to a country house in the mountains, which Lord Fitz-Aucher had rented, she was literally covered with the bouquets thrown at her by the numbers of her loving black friends.

This was the outside show. The only consolation within, for poor Ethna's little heart was, that she was doing her duty—that she was obeying what the Almighty had decreed for her.

The steamer by which Sir Romuald was to depart was expected the next week.

His leaving a government he had held so long, and

where he had won so much esteem, caused great sorrow among the people.

The negroes, and especially those on the estate he owned, were very much distressed. He always went by the name of "the Massa;" and never passed any of them, young or old, in the streets or country, without receiving the respectful curtesy or bow, and "How d'ye, mi massa?"

They hardly knew now how to show their sorrow at losing him. They knew enough of Government appointments to understand that if he were moved again, it would be on still higher promotion, not back to them; and their grief was very touching, as they feared they would never see him again.

They called many times *to look at him*; and a repetition took place of offerings such as were made to Ethna and her brothers when they left for England.

When the gun fired announcing the arrival of the steam mail by which he was to leave, the whole population seemed to be gathered in the town.

The officers of the regiment stationed there, with a guard of honour; all the gentlemen holding public appointments, the Honourable Members of the Privy Council, the Members of the Legislative Council, and those of the House of Assembly, all arrived, each body presenting an address expressive of their regret at losing him, the esteem they had always felt for him, and the deep regard with which he would always be remembered.

The streets were thronged with a pressing multitude collected to see the "dear gubner," "di good massa" go on board. When the steamer having landed its mail, and given time for the reading of despatches, awaited the coming on board of the party, he left the happy home of so many years, made sacred to him by the grave which had turned his life to sorrow, in obeying the orders of his country.

And Ethna was left behind. She saw him go, after he had pressed her in his arms, and given her his blessing. Lord Fitz-Aucher went on board with him, but she could not. It was a parting harder even to bear than the last had been.

Miss Anderson, the quaint old cousin, was taken with him, to do all that she would so much have liked to do herself. "He had given her away at a sacrifice to himself," he said, "and for her good."

"Dear, dear papa! I will try and make it good for my soul, at any rate!"

## CHAPTER XV.

ETHNA's trials soon began, and with them, also, were opened up to her all the opportunities for usefulness in various shapes, as well as the means for conquering self, modifying and subduing her faults, and rubbing off all her imperfections.

The seeing this, and thereby feeling sure of God's will in the way she had been disposed of, formed not only a great consolation to her, but even caused much rejoicing within her heart, as being a testimony of that LOVE that dieth not, and would always aid, protect, and lead her on to the attainment of her one great aim.

Lord Fitz-Aucher, in whose family gout was hereditary, had been attacked by it once before leaving England, and residing in the tropics did not seem likely to relieve him of this malady. He was laid up with it two months after his marriage, and his wife's capacity as nurse called into request.

So soon ! before she knew anything of his temper and disposition, or the irritability which gout causes. She found him to be most noble, excellent, generous,

kind, devoted; she felt this, and could esteem him thoroughly; but still the disparity in age, the difference in tone of mind, his seeming worldliness, the want of unity between them—they were not *one*, but *two*. Much as he admired her he could not *understand* her, nor she him.

What a path there was before her! How many windings in it! How much tact, patience, resignation, forbearance, sweetness of temper were needed. "I must hold it always up before me," she thought, "and if I slip, as no doubt I shall, be more strict afterwards. If he were only not quite so worldly; if I were not so completely his *one idol*, I think it might be more congenial.

"On one point we can never mutually touch, at present; perhaps it may be my privilege to lead him to it. This would be joy! I will hope for this! I will pray for it! I will work for it!"

So she took her post as nurse. She sat and talked in a merry way to amuse him. She read to him. She swathed the foot which burned with pain, and fanned it. She mixed his medicine, brought him his food, eased his pillow.

"That delicate little hand of yours just passed lightly to and fro over the burning pain in this elbow would be so soothing. Will you do it for me, love?"

And she did it. Sat and stood with patience quite unwearied, tending him for several weeks until the attack was over.

But it was a trial. Gout causes peculiar irritability, and requires the meekest patience in the attendant.

She had, however, as her assistants the good Rosette, who, it will be remembered, was the daughter of an African prince; and the old nurse, Solange, who had taken her to England.

They were well acquainted with this complaint; and she learnt from them how to bear with it. Whenever she was in dismay they cried out, "Eh, mi missis must have patience!" But to the poor little girl, not yet quite nineteen, it was rather appalling, particularly as there was a prospect of frequent recurring attacks before her.

Lord Fitz-Aucher was, however, now himself again, and prouder of his wife than ever.

Ethna's watchword was, "Whether it be hard or easy, my duty is the same."

A round of gaiety now began; they had to go to balls and dinners, and to give them.

Friends would come in to breakfast and to lunch, and plates were always laid for any one who might join them in the evening ride, and being disengaged were glad to take advantage of so kind an invite.

No one could be more delighted than was Uncou Henry at having his "little missey" back again, and in the place her mother held; he was most indefatigable, and took care her entertainments should do her credit.

It was her order that a part of every delicacy she was obliged to have at her table, should be reserved for some sick person; and Uncou Henry was so pleased to help in this that he would look out and take the dish away before it was all consumed.

It was a very common thing for the doctors to call at Government House, after their morning visits, and give her a list of all their patients who required looking after and much nourishment. Such cases as these—"Young men not long from England, without friends, laid low with fever, if they have not plenty of nourishment they may slip through our fingers. . . . Mrs. C——, a widow with a large family, can hardly have too much kindness shown her."

Parents who could not afford to send their little girls to England, were very grateful to Lady Fitz-Aucher for taking such notice of their children. She had them with her in the morning, improved them in music, and taught them many things which otherwise they could not have known.

In fact, there was no act of kindness or charity which she could do that was neglected. She had only to ask her husband, and any one in debt or need would get a loan.

"My little wife! you know I can't refuse you. You ask for it so bewitchingly."

On one occasion a splendid set of amethysts, comprising necklets, bracelet, brooch, earrings, ring and tiara, were sent in a case to the Governor by a French



jeweller, begging the purchase for "madame," to whom they would be so becoming.

Lord Fitz-Aucher showed them to her, and wished very much to purchase them.

"Don't buy them for me, my dear lord! I do not like or wish for them at all. I would rather not have them. I could not bear to wear them; but if you will give me the money they would cost I should thank you very much indeed. That lawyer lately from England, with his young wife, is in great distress. He has not had anything to do, and they could not avoid debt. She confided this to me very lately. I should so much like to take them out of it."

"But if he can get nothing to do, you will have to go on keeping him, I fear."

"Oh no; he will go to another island then, where he most likely will succeed better."

The money was given, and the lawyer thoroughly relieved.

A few days before a large public entertainment had to be given, and for which the invitations had been issued and accepted, poor Uncou Henry was taken very seriously ill. He had a violent attack of pleurisy, brought on by drinking cold water when he was in a great heat, from having over-excited himself in some very active employment he was earnest in. He had been standing, too, at the same time between an open door and window, and had also much fever with it.

Ethna immediately placed her nurses at his side, and had doctors to him, though his own wife was in attendance; but this did not satisfy the watchful mistress. She knew that Uncou Henry would be so pleased if she nursed him also herself, and that Estella, his wife, though not young, was so frightened and nervous she could hardly be of use.

The doctors ordered a blister on the chest, and this Ethna herself put on, though Rosette and Solange were close at hand, to tell her how to do it.

"Tank i', mi missis—tank i', mi missis," said Henry with grateful eyes. "Me go better soon—me go better soon."

She was at his side many times that day, though the dinner-party was to take place in the evening.

The blister was not to be taken off and the chest dressed until about the time when she would be leaving the table, and she therefore promised Henry she would come and do it herself.

Therefore, when the time came, and she was at liberty for half an hour, by begging the few ladies with her to amuse themselves till she returned, it did not take her long to cross the garden by the light of the moon to Henry's rooms. She was in dove-coloured satin and white lace. The pearl brooch which confined the lace berthe on her shoulders, held also a sprig of jasmine, and a pearl band held her hair off from the forehead, to fall in loose, long clusters over all.

Uncou Henry looked up with delight as he saw

her enter, knowing by her dress that she had left her company to attend to him ; and he felt anxious to know how the dinner he had been preparing for had passed off.

“ Ah ! mi missis, wha you bin do be out me ? ”

“ Not so well, Henry, without you as with you, but the other men have done very well indeed, and your young son was very attentive. You have trained him well ; and everything went off capitally.”

She then bent over him, and tenderly took off the blister, clipping it carefully under the directions of Solange. Rosette was holding ready a very young banana leaf, with some olive oil to moisten it previously to laying it over the blistered flesh. This she did herself, unrolling the curled-up leaf, holding it open while the oil was laid on it, and then placing it carefully and lightly all over his chest. Poor Henry felt so very much relieved by this delightfully cool, soft application, that the expression of his face quite changed, and the gratitude with which he looked at his dear young “ missis ” was ample reward to her for her care and trouble.\*

“ I think it is time for his medicine. I gave him the last—I will this. Have you given him his nourishment regularly ? ”

“ Yes, mi missis ; da crapaud soup so good, he go do um plenty good, da crapaud soup.”

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\* The young banana leaf, cut before it is unrolled, is a very far superior dressing for a blister to anything had in England, and much suffering to English patients would be spared them if these could be obtained.

"Very well; there is custard and blanc-mange jelly to come for him from the dinner-table. Take great care of him through the night."

To any stranger peeping into this room the scene would have been novel and interesting. The black man stretched on his bed, Ethna bending over him with tender solicitude, and the three black women—his wife, and the nurses—hanging round with anxious faces, lighted up by a lamp made of castor-oil, and rude enough, it is true, but which was placed before a statuette of the Blessed Virgin with the Infant Jesus in her arms.

Ethna knelt and said a few prayers for the sick from her book of devotions before bidding them good-night, and departed with the words, "Bless i, mi missis—bless i, mi missis!" ringing in her ears.

Had Ethna done more than her duty? Many would have thought that supplying nurses and doctors and nourishment was quite enough without exerting themselves. But is it so? Is a kindness done through an order the same as when done by one's self? The black people don't think so, and it is believed no one else does. Uncou Henry was a devout member of Christ's Church on earth; he was one of God's children as well as was Ethna. Was he not then her brother? Could she as such do too much for him? It was this feeling within her inspiring every action which gained so much influence over these poor people.

Distressing news came to her from England about her little brothers. She was the one chief object of their love, and to her they opened out their hearts. For several months they had both been very ill. They were in England completely exotic plants, but had not been treated as such in the public schools where they had been placed; or, rather, their very high spirits had led them to compete with other boys of much greater strength, in cricket and other games. In this way they were exposed to cold and damp, which had told on their constitutions, and it was feared by the medical men, who advised their returning to the tropics for a time, that unless they did so, rapid decline would be their end.

"I know my precious little wife would like to have them with her."

"I should, indeed."

"Then why don't you have them, love?"

"Because I could not do so without your free and quite willing consent; and I should wish you to think well about it; they might interfere with your comfort. I ought not to do anything that would have that effect."

"And is it not your own house as much as mine? Am I your master instead of your husband? Have your brothers out, by all means—at once; it is my earnest wish. If you nurse them as you do me, you will very soon restore their health."

"Will you really not mind it? will it not be a trouble to you—a tax upon your noble generosity?"

"No, my own love; your being gratified will repay me all."

Ethna felt—"Indeed, my father was right; there could not be a kinder, nobler spirit."

He was reclining in an easy chair. She fell on her knees beside him, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"Thank you from the depth of my heart!"

"My precious little wife, you deserve it!"

The boys were sent for, and on arriving their appearance showed how much they needed it.

"Oh, my good husband, how can I ever thank you enough for letting me have them with me? They are dying surely, and I should never have seen them again or been able to do anything for them, but for your kindness."

They needed the greatest attention, and a great part of her time was taken up with them; but yet no other duty was neglected, no excusing herself from anything her husband required because of her sick little brothers. They were on their couch, and wanted all the amusement she took pleasure in giving them; but it always was, "I must leave you now, dearies, for Lord Fitz-Aucher wants me. You won't weary for me, will you? You know my first duty is to my husband."

"Yes, dear sister; don't let Lord Fitz-Aucher think we take up too much of your time. That good Rosette is

very kind. Go and get a nice long ride. I wish I could go with you."

"Perhaps you may be able after a little while, my pet," though a foreboding pang makes her feel it could hardly be.

"What a marvellous little thing you are, my wife; I seem to have just as much of you as if your brothers were not here."

"Could I possibly let you feel the want of me, do you think? That would be very wicked."

The attacks of gout came on more quickly than she had anticipated, and lasted longer; and her brothers continued great invalids, particularly the elder one, who was in a rapid decline.

Ethna was most assiduous in her attentions, and was becoming a most excellent nurse. The consequence of this was, that no one else could do things to please Lord Fitz-Aucher so well as she, and therefore he, both from his affection and selfishness about her, was most exacting; and having also all the "Lady at Government House duties" to attend to, so as to please all, her time was fully occupied, and her strength much tried.

She had fortunately, however, most available help in her attendants.

The faithful black African Rosette was never forgotten through all her after-life, and the lessons she learnt from this valued servant were of infinite use to her, but in patience most particularly.

Rosette had been brought away from Africa when quite a child ; she was now fifty-five, and as sincere and devout a Christian as could be found all over the world, excepting, perhaps, nuns, but they only.

Her patience, her faithfulness, and her charity were, one might almost say, perfect, for, speaking really the truth in describing her character, never did anything ever seem to irritate her. This might be from a somewhat want in other respects, but, nevertheless, such was the fact. It seemed almost impossible to try her too much, or to expect too much from her.

"The massa was ill," and the "missis was nursing him," and therefore she felt that nothing was to be thought of but to wait on them night and day, without even a murmur or a tired expression, be the patient ever so cross or fault-finding with what she did.

It was an excellent pattern for Ethna to follow, and she often had reason to be humbled by it when at times she gave way. Many times she came very far short of the example set her, having to battle very hard with herself to keep down the risings of impatience, while she saw Rosette's face placid, calm, and unmoved.

Rosette was an illiterate African, gentle reader, but a good Roman Catholic, striving hard to secure her salvation by observing strictly all the laws and rules the priests had taught her, and "Let patience have her perfect work" seemed to be the text she lived by.

Ethna took advantage of these illnesses to try to work out what she was praying for.



It will be remembered how particularly attractive her reading was as a child ; it had increased in this attribute as she grew older, and understood and entered more deeply into what she read. Lord Fitz-Aucher was very much soothed by it, and would listen to anything.

She therefore chose tales that would incite holy and religious thoughts, and by degrees she introduced some lives of the saints, meditations, parts from the "Imitation of Christ," &c.

He never objected, and she could not fail to be sensible that a change was taking place in him, though very gradually.

The days and weeks passed on, but notwithstanding all her good nursing, her brothers did not improve much. Bernard promised best, but there seemed no hope for Otway—the return to a warm climate had been delayed too long.

Bernard after a little began to rally, could roam about on the beach, take a short ride, interest himself in many things, and his cough appeared to be leaving him ; he looked also much better, and gave promise of recovery ; but there was a deep hollowness in Otway's cough which told there was no cure. Each day he got more haggard, and his eye more bright.

How was it ? It was not a family disease. No, but they had been at school, and were there treated like the other boys of stronger frame. No difference was made for the tender young exotics from the tropics. The play-

hours came, and damp or cold, the spirit of the boys would take them out with others who, being in their native clime, were used to it.

They were very merry; they laughed, they romped, and the master thought 'twas well with them; but they were all the while inhaling what brought death.

While he was in this critical state, Lord Fitz-Aucher, who had been well for some little time, attended much to business, and given many entertainments, was again laid up with gout.

Notwithstanding her brother's needs, Ethna made a firm resolve that he should not miss any of the services he required of her. Therefore, poor girl, it may be imagined how she toiled.

Often, when taking a little rest in her own room, she fancied she heard her husband's groan of pain, and she was up and by his side in an instant; or it would be, perhaps, that one of the nurses watching would get a little frightened at the expression of Otway's face, and come softly in to see if she were sleeping.

The gentle entrance, the looking at her would be enough to rouse—

“What is it, dear Rosette?”

“Oh, mi missis, di poor litti boy's face no look good!”

Up in alarm, she would run and kneel by his side; watch with eagerness until, as is usual, a little rallying again took place.

She was sleeping. The doctor had looked in during

the evening, and fearing poor Otway could not last on through the night, he sent her to bed, saying—

“I will come in at twelve o’clock, and if I find him any worse I will send for you.”

He did come in at twelve. Rosette was closely watching, but there was no rallying since he saw him last. The dear, good boy was sinking, and though he might last some hours, the doctor felt he must fulfil his word; so he sent Rosette for her.

Ethna jumped up, feeling a touch on her arm.

“Mi missis, di doctor call you.”

She knew why it was.

“Rosette, who will go for the priest?”

“Di doctor sen Uncou Henry a’ready, mi missis.”

She was immediately with her dying brother. He put out his arms to her, and almost inaudibly said, “I am going now.”

The priest arrived to attend his last moments, and not leave him till all was over.

After an hour had passed, Otway asked his sister to raise him in her arms and let him lay his cheek close to hers.

She passed her hand under the pillow and did as he wished.

She was leaning in an awkward position, so they pushed a couch up for her to rest on. He lay in this way gradually sinking till the morning, when, with a sigh, he breathed out his little holy soul.

Lord Fitz-Aucher was confined with gout; he could

not act the part he wished; but the priest took upon himself all the responsibility, and the fine, promising, noble, and amiable boy—his mother's pride—was now laid in the grave beside her.

Little Bernard was now left desolate, and the loss of the brother, who had been his constant companion from his birth, so afflicted him that it threw him back very much in health, and it was feared he would soon follow.

The sorrow Ethna felt was in a degree assuaged by the necessity for attending him assiduously, and her anxiety about him; as well as the waiting on her husband, who was not mending in health quickly.

# CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION,

Montfort, N. J.

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*in any case*

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE newly-emancipated negroes had gone on for some several years in perfect content and quietness under the mild and judicious treatment of Sir Romuald de Montfort.

They had at first required the most gentle and lenient tact in managing them; because the very sudden and complete freedom given to them at once was what they could not quite understand.

They fancied that freedom consisted in being able to do just as they liked, and did not think it necessary to submit to the laws of the country; or to be obliged to labour if they preferred doing nothing, and spending their days sleeping in the sun, swimming in the river, or catching fish, which, with a few vegetables, is all they care to eat.

Sir Romuald had never coerced them about this, nor would he allow others to do so.

He simply induced them to work by offering rewards, and teaching them the advantage of labour, as by earning money they improved their condition, and enabled themselves to provide comforts and luxuries such as the "buckras" had.

He had been leading them on in this way for many years, and being so much loved among them he had great influence.

There were a few renegades, however, who were beginning to give a little trouble just before he left by leaving their homes on the estates whose owners were not only willing to employ them, but feeling the want of their services, and *squatting*, as it was called, on the "Queen's chains."

Considering themselves perfectly free, they thought thus to make themselves entirely independent of any employers or landlords.

They built themselves huts close to the shore—enclosed a little bit of ground round it, in which they planted fruit trees and vegetables, choosing little nooks so much out of sight under cliffs that it was difficult to find them out; and imagined that because this part of the land belonged exclusively to the good Queen who had set them free, that she would be pleased to let them remain there.

Sir Romuald had smiled and winked at this in a measure as being just what any simple child would do; and thought it best to humour them a little for a while, till perhaps necessity, or some other good cause, might show them the foolishness of their deeds.

The owners of the estates, however, and the managers complained very loudly about this, and considered that this example in a few might create discontent among the many, and prevent their obtaining that labour

which was necessary for cultivating the land and ensuring good crops.

The stipendiary magistrates took it up, and, therefore, it was necessary to report the matter to the Home Government, to know how it was to be dealt with.

It so happened that it was just before this report being sent home, that the change in governors was made, and Lord Fitz-Aucher sent out to take the command, when Sir Romuald was promoted on to a higher and more difficult position.

Some new stipendiary magistrates were also sent out about the same time, and when the despatches came in answer to the report that these squatters were to be ejected, and nothing of the sort to be allowed for the future, it caused a great deal of murmuring, not so much at the order itself, as to the manner in which the new magistrates were carrying it out.

The old magistrates, who understood the people better, managed to get them off the land, kindly giving them a little time, and reasoning with them, never attempting the least violence, but succeeding at last in executing their order through persuasion and inducement to return to the estate they had always lived on, and give honest labour in return for their house and piece of ground. The old magistrates had been friends of Sir Romuald's, and had learnt how to deal with these people from him and his experience. The new magistrates having come out about the same time Lord Fitz-Aucher did, and acting differently, with violence and coercion, caused

suspicion among the negroes in their new Governor, and brewed discontent.

Time went on as we have seen. Lord Fitz-Aucher made himself very popular indeed among the white inhabitants generally, and more especially with the immediate circle visiting at Government House. His wife having been an old favourite with them from babyhood added very much to this.

Entertainments of every kind took place on every occasion calling for them, and the only thing they deplored was his being so often laid up with gout.

His style of governing pleased them very much, and every measure he took with the idea of improvement found ready assent and assistance. He had fallen in entirely with Sir Romuald's views about the local management, and was simply carrying on what his predecessor had begun.

But the violent measures taken by the new stipendiary magistrates in ejecting the squatters on the "Queen's chains" had fired up the negroes, more particularly because, as they were strictly executing the orders of the Government in England, *through* the Governor, Lord Fitz-Aucher could only remonstrate with them about the *manner* of their doing it, and not prevent the deed itself.

The negroes therefore fancied he rather encouraged the magistrates in this than otherwise.

A few English colonists of the lower order, too, some Methodists and Moravians who had settled themselves



on the island after it was taken by the English from the French, took advantage of this brewing discontent to excite ill feeling in the negroes towards the Catholic owners of the estates on which they lived, and in whose service they worked, by telling them they were not well enough paid, and were being oppressed and not treated as free subjects.

One of these stipendiary magistrates, too, a rough ill-tempered Scotchman, who, having a large family, had sought this post for the sake of emolument, very unfortunately just about this crisis managed to give great offence to his servants by his style of speech and bad humour.

Coming home one day from his walk on the beach, with very dirty, muddy boots, he called to the boy whose duty it was to clean them—

“Here, you young black devil, take these boots and make them as black and shining as your devilish black face.”

The boy obeyed, but saying at the same time, “Massa, mi skin black, but mi heart white like fou you own. Ah! eh! um; da so fou treat a’ we? Mi neber see someting so—black debil!—da he wha di white debil.”

The sore sting he felt from this was communicated to his friends, and all this put together created a stir which foreboded ill.

The negroes, however, in their very secret and mysterious way of communicating one with the other when they wish to keep any scheme private, were managing

so well that no one suspected in the least any other than that they were being managed and ruled successfully.

It was St. Andrew's Day. Lord and Lady Fitz-Aucher were entertaining at dinner a large party of the principal public officials, who, as Scotchmen naturally enjoyed keeping this day, as it had been for some years a usual rule at Government House not to allow either St. Patrick's, or St. Andrew's, or St. George's to go by unnoticed.

Uncou Henry had got a splendid dessert ready, and was just removing the last course to prepare the table to make a proud display of it, when a horse at full speed was heard to approach, and presently a message was brought into the Governor that a certain aide-de-camp had just galloped from one of the outskirts of the town with news which it was necessary he should at once make known to his Excellency, and begged he would favour him with a hearing.

Lord Fitz-Aucher ordered that the aide-de-camp should be shown in at once, motioning for a chair to be placed beside him.

He entered hurriedly in full uniform, with his cocked hat and feathers in his hand, and with so excited a manner that it struck dismay in all the company.

"My lord, I am most sorry to be obliged to intrude on you in this way, but the urgency of the case admits of no delay.

"I am informed, on the safest authority, that the

negroes at the windward end of the island have all risen in a body, and are marching towards the town with large clubs, cutlasses, and torches. They are setting fire, as they come along, to the sugar-works and dwelling-houses on every estate they pass through, and their forces are increased by the men on each estate, as they pass, joining them, having been all evidently prepared beforehand and ready for it.

"I am also informed, on the same authority, that communications have been going on secretly from windward to leeward, and that the negroes to leeward are all ready also to march towards the town directly they hear that their comrades have succeeded so far, and are on the look-out to dash forward.

"Their intention is to kill all the stipendiary magistrates, but their inciting cry is 'The Governor's head!'

"I trust your Excellency will consider I am doing my duty in reporting this."

"Most assuredly, you deserve all praise, *Monro*. We all of us thank you very deeply. Take a glass of wine, for you require it.

"And now, gentlemen, as you have heard my valued aide-de-camp say the urgency of the case admits of no delay, we must arm and be off to meet them at once. I am sorry to be obliged to break up our pleasant party, but I will look forward to the pleasure of receiving you again after this unpleasant affair is settled.

"*Monro*, if you are sufficiently rested, will you first of all order that martial law be proclaimed in the

town and throughout the island, and then ride off to the garrison and order out the troops. I will be ready to head our whole force in half an hour."

Ethna turned deadly pale and trembled, but she commanded herself completely.

What could have made these poor blacks act in this way? she thought. It was a thing entirely new to her. She had never known them but as submissive and obedient.

It could not be because of their freedom, for those on her father's estate had been free from the first.

She waited calmly till Lord Fitz-Aucher appeared in full uniform ready to start.

We know that he was a very tall, finely-made figure, and handsome-faced man. He belonged to the Guards, and when in full uniform, ready for battle, he bore a most imposing appearance.

Ethna rose as he entered her boudoir, and advanced towards him holding out both her hands to take his, and then clasping them up in a prayerful petition, she begged him to be careful and not to use any violence.

"Don't unsheathe your sword, my lord, unless in self-defence. They will be like tigers if you attack them that way, but like lambs if you only treat them gently. When anything infuriates them they forget for a time that they are Christians, and become like animals. Pat and coax a dog and you will master him, but if you strike at him he will fly at you."

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"Don't be alarmed, my little wife; I think I understand how to deal with them. I am sending to collect all the ladies within reach who can be brought to Government House, and I entreat you to take charge of them. I am ordering a guard and sentinels to watch for your safe protection. You are such a favourite, I don't think that, even in their fury, they would hurt you; but I cannot go without doing everything for securing you and the wives of those I am taking with me against intrusion or attack.

A bugle sounded, and immediately the whole of the staff rode up to the portico, where Lord Fitz-Aucher's war-steed, fully caparisoned, was waiting for him to mount.

He was soon in the saddle, and leading the way was followed by the others, riding on to meet and head the whole force, which was collected together at the appointed place.

Ethna was soon surrounded by her black friends, who, in great alarm, determined to take care of her, come what may.

Zezele, who had been her mother's maid and was now hers, threw herself at her feet, clasping her knees, declaring that she would never leave her—"Mi go dead wi you, mi missis; me no go lef you."

Babet, Chloe, Susanne, Estelle, Rosette, Solange, Buddy Noel, Uncou Henry, Pa Prosper, Lewis, John, and others came hurrying to her one after the other, some kneeling at her feet, others squatting on the floor

in humble position, to show that they were come to cling to her whatever might happen.

"What is it, my kind servants? what is the matter with those people who have risen up in rebellion all at once in this way?"

"I never thought they would do such a thing; I always thought them so peaceful and humble. What is it has made them do this, Rosette?"

"Ah, mi missis—me no sabby—da so some people stan—dem no hab patience."

"But what has tried their patience? What makes them so impatient as to come with clubs and cutlasses and torches, setting fire to houses. Oh! it is very naughty of them, Rosette, I am so sorry. Why didn't they come and complain to the Governor, or tell me all their trouble? I would have tried to help them, I am so sorry!"

"Me no sabby, mi missis—me no sabby—da so some people stan—dem no hab patience."

"Da dey bad buckras, me missis," said Uncou Henry, coming forward. "Me ax 'bout dis, dey tell me da di bad buckras wha mak dis; dey 'Tipés.'"

"The magistrates, Henry! Have they been unkind? You know they have to do what they are told and make people obey the laws."

"Mi missis, da good Queen wha mak a' we free no bin tell um fou ca' a' we black debil; me sabby dat; he no tell um fou buse a' we cause a' we hab black skin. Di good massa neber bin talk so."

"Do the magistrates talk in this way?"

"Yes, mi missis; he no good t'a t'a."

"I am so sorry for it, Henry; but why did they not come and tell the Governor?"

"Mi missis, s'pose me bin know, me bin tell um fou come."

"I am sure you would, Henry. Did you know anything about it, Noel?"

"No, mi missis, dey no tell a' we na Gomier."

"Are you come to stay with me, then, till the Governor comes back, and take care of me?"

"Yes, mi missis, dey niggir no go hurt you—me sabby dat."

Ethna was here called away to receive some ladies who had arrived in great fright; and more came pouring in as fast as Lord Fitz-Aucher's messengers could bring them, so that in a short time her rooms were quite full, and she had so much to do in ministering to their various wants caused by excitement, fright, and not being able to command themselves, that she had no time to think, but only to offer a few prayers every now and then that all this might end well.

From some of these ladies, however, she learned that the Moravians and Methodists had been exciting the people against their masters who were Catholics, with the view of turning them from their religion.

This caused her great annoyance and trouble. They were low people who had come to the island as shopkeepers, milliners, hairdressers, shoemakers, &c., and

had always been a cause of anxiety and trouble to her father, from their undermining all good-will and pure charity by their inuendoes and deceitful dealing, both in traffic and extortion.

The night passed on in dread and alarm, as may be imagined.

No one could think of retiring to rest. Ethna was in her dinner dress as attired for the large party which was broken up in this distressing way; and though reclining on a couch with a mantilla over her whenever permitted, she was constantly roused by the distresses of her lady friends all round her.

Her black servants faithfully kept their word, and were in attendance on her all the night through. They naturally took the part of their comrades who felt themselves wronged; but were with strict justice ready to defend the *good buckras*, and distinguish between *them* and those they called bad.

Little Bernard had been sent to bed before the dinner party, and though he was roused by the sound of the bugle and the bustle, had merely turned and gone to sleep again. Ethna looked in at him once or twice through the long night, but found him resting sweetly, though it seemed to be more the consequence of extreme weakness than of returning health.

The sad night at last came to an end, and the sweetest, freshest morning greeted the watchers, as if mocking their intense anxiety.

About noon tidings came that Lord Fitz-Aucher's



little force had reached an estate called Geneva, having only taken a few hours' rest before morning. As this estate was next to the place where the rebel negroes were said to have collected, it was supposed that an encounter would take place that afternoon.

But as nothing further was heard, one more night of watching was at least before them ; and this passed on in the same way nearly as the last, except that with more weariness there was less restlessness, and the morning awoke as before.

About the same hour again in the day, a messenger arrived from Lord Fitz-Aucher to announce his victorious return.

The news the officer brought was most welcome and delightful. He recounted to his eager listeners all that took place. The rebel negroes were collected in a force much stronger than was anticipated ; but they seemed dismayed at the sight of the little army brought against them ; not from its numbers, for they were not so very large, but from the undaunted valour and manner of the man who led them, and whose head they had been incited to cut off.

He rode forward a little in advance of his staff, raised his hand to his plumed helmet, and then waved it towards them in token of good-will if they would accept it.

Following this action up immediately with words, he begged to know what was the cause of their rising in rebellion in this way : adding that if it was anything

reasonable, anything in which they could prove themselves to have been wronged, oppressed, or unjustly used, he would be happy to see them redressed at once. But they must understand that although they were a free people, they were bound to obey the laws of the country which had made them free ; and that he was placed as their Governor to carry out those laws, and not only to take care of them, and do everything he could to improve their condition and make them happy, but to make them obey the laws of the country in every respect, and punish them if they resisted.

He concluded by saying that nothing whatever should or would interfere with his doing his duty to his country and to them ; and therefore he wished to know what was their grievance, that if possible it might be lessened ; warning them at the same time that his soldiers were well armed, their rifles loaded with shot, and that if they attempted any attack or violence, he would immediately give orders to his officers to fire on them and charge with their bayonets.

Lord Fitz-Aucher was not sufficiently acquainted with their jargon to make his speech in their words, but they understood him well enough ; and his imposing appearance and style, bravely fronting them, savage and infuriated as they had worked themselves up to be, subdued them at once, particularly as the officers of his staff all stood as if in readiness to execute his order to fire, if occasion were given him to do so.

The result of this was that a few of the chief rebels, among whom was the father of the boy who had been so insulted, came forward to speak about the matters in which they felt they were cruelly used, naming principally that of not being allowed to build themselves huts close on the sea-shore.

This, of course, could not be given into; so they were told that no rebellion on their part would gain that, because, as had been explained to them before, the good Queen who had made them free would not allow them to build on her land—the “Queen’s chains,” so called from a certain number of a surveyor’s “chains” measured from the sea up—set apart as public land, not to be purchased by any one.

The next points were the cruel way in which they were ejected, and the bad language used to them in giving orders.

This the Governor said he would inquire about and prevent for the future, on the condition of their all returning peacefully and quietly to their homes, and being contented with the houses and gardens round them, which were built on every estate for the people required to work them. He must take two of the men and keep them as prisoners until he was satisfied that order was completely restored, and that they were all at home with their families, engaged in their usual employments, with a full assurance that they would never attempt such an outrage again.

When he felt convinced that such was the case the

prisoners would be set free, and until that time he should keep his army in full readiness in case of any further disturbance, when they would not find him so lenient again.

The prisoners were selected from among the ring-leaders, as being well-known characters for less submissiveness and docile obedience than others.

These being well secured, Lord Fitz-Aucher bade the others depart home, and rest assured that if they only conducted themselves like good Christian men, as they were, they would always have the greatest consideration and kindness from him.

He then waited in front of his army to see them disperse, which they did immediately, cheering him at the same time.

In this way not a drop of blood was shed nor a sword drawn.

When they had all disappeared on their way home, he turned and sent one of the officers of his staff on in advance as quickly as possible to acquaint the panic-stricken white inhabitants of the island of this victorious termination.

They were all terribly fatigued by the quick way they had to march onwards, up and down hill, to meet the rebels, in order to prevent as much burning of houses and canes as possible, and it was necessary to return as leisurely as they could, for fear of being attacked with fever as a consequence.

One only sad calamity marked the event. A young

man not long returned from receiving his education in England, the son of a widow, though not her only son, and just entering life as a clerk in a merchant's office, had a "sunstroke," so severe it was feared he would never recover it.

This was a case which called for Ethna's deepest sympathy, and she gave it in full, going at once to the widow's house, and doing all she could for both mother and son.

Many others had fever after arriving home, and Lord Fitz-Aucher himself an attack of gout; but the affair was finally settled and terminated.

The priests went to visit the two prisoners, and took the other rebels under their care in order to bring their minds into a proper state of feeling; and before the prisoners were set free, they humbly begged pardon on their knees, of their own free-will, for themselves and their comrades, promising never to act in the same way again.

They made a determination not to listen any more to what "bad buckras" said, but to try to please the "good buckras," who were always so kind to them.

The white inhabitants of the island voted an address of thanks to the Governor, and a subscription was raised to purchase a testimonial. As this amounted to a handsome sum, a very splendid silver epergne, standing between four and five feet high, with an inscription in very flattering terms, was sent for to England, and presented on its arrival.

They felt they owed their lives, their property, and all they held dear to his prompt, decided, and valorous conduct, as well as the wise leniency and gentle management, so much more successful with the black tribe than anything arbitrary or violent.

By the return mail from England, after the announcement of this event, came the thanks of the English Government and its warm approval to Lord Fitz-Aucher, who found his reward in the better conduct of the blacks, and the warm attachment of the whole population.

Ethna redoubled her efforts for their improvement; and aided by her husband and the subscriptions of all the proprietors, schools were established in every neighbourhood, by day for the children, and night-schools for the men and women.

It was a very common thing indeed, nay, a usual thing, to find her in the morning seated in one of the schoolrooms she had gone to visit, with a black child in her lap, others clinging about her knees, and more climbing up the back of her chair to peep over her shoulders at some pictures she had to show, or anything in the way of needlework she was teaching.

Whenever she appeared, the children all ran to her, contending for the nearest place.

Hospitals too were now established for the free people, which as slaves they had not required, and there she very regularly visited, besides attending to all the sick in their own homes, rich or poor, in any

case, even where only a kind word and sympathy were needed.

Her brother Bernard lingered on for some time, now better, now worse, and at last was laid in that same grave which it was her comfort to attend to, and keep sweet and pretty with fresh plants.

From her father she heard constantly. He was still the same, never forgetting his one great loss, but trying now to live so holy a life as to ensure his meeting her again after death.

He was, besides, gaining fresh laurels from his country, and the affection of those he now governed.

And now, as the only object for introducing Ethna to the public was to show the beauty of the negro character, when as Catholic Christians they are under the discipline of the Church, guided and directed by its priests, and helped by the Blessed Sacraments; as it is hoped this is accomplished, we will now take leave of her while still labouring for their benefit.

Those who may be interested in her will be glad to know that she had then become the mother of a beautiful baby boy, and also the happiness of receiving from Heaven an answer to her prayer in witnessing the reception of her husband into the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ.

THE END.









